



Theory of Change for Workforce Innovation Networks (WINS) January 2002

The document was created by the WINS partners, with the assistance of Brody-Weiser-Burns, as a strategic planning tool to help identify the change strategy, process and outcome indicators for Phase III of the WINS initiative.



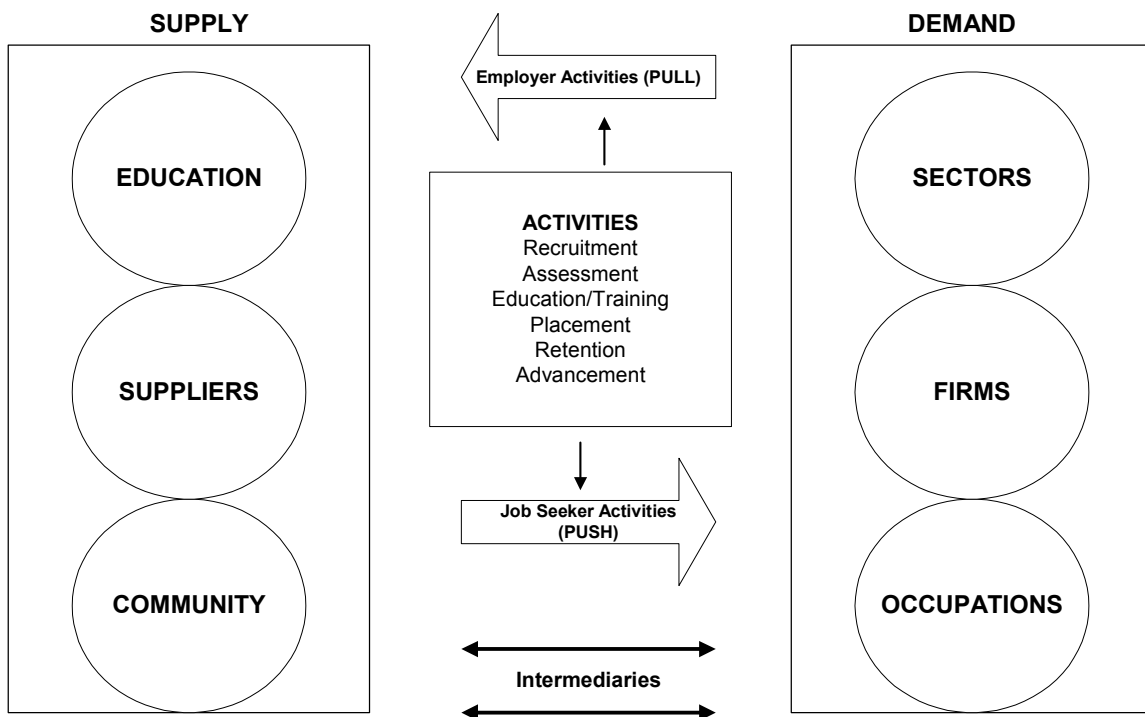
Framework and Goals

Workforce Innovation Networks (WINs) is a partnership of Jobs for the Future (JFF), the Center for Workforce Success of the National Association of Manufacturers (CWS) and the Center for Workforce Preparation of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce (CWP). WINs seeks to demonstrate that state and local employer organizations (EOs) can be effective intermediaries in improving labor market outcomes among low-income populations while meeting employer workforce needs. EOs can help to align the activities of the workforce development system with the needs of employers and of low-income individuals to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Employers are better able to meet their need to recruit, develop and advance productive entry-level workers.
2. More low-income individuals are hired into “family supporting” jobs and career paths.

The workforce development (WFD) system is part of the labor market, which is quite complex. Its elements are illustrated in broad outline in the following diagram:

Elements of the Labor Market



In this diagram, “intermediaries” covers a wide range of organizations that link job seekers to employers, including employer intermediaries, trade associations, Workforce Investment Boards, unions, stakeholder partnerships, community-based organizations,

national nonprofits, and for-profit labor market intermediaries. Clearly, there are many different types of intermediaries, which play a variety of different roles. One important distinction is between "multi-stakeholder" intermediaries or partnerships, which include a wide representation from a wide variety of actors (like the Workforce Investment Boards), and "single-stakeholder" intermediaries, which represent a focused constituency (like the EOs or the unions). The multi-stakeholder intermediaries tend to perform the roles of working out the compromises and the policies that govern the system, while the single-stakeholder intermediaries tend to focus on ensuring that the system works well for their constituents.

Why the System Isn't Working

The current labor market system currently is not achieving the outcomes set out above. Disadvantaged people are not gaining sufficient access to "good" entry-level jobs that can lead to family supporting careers. Employers currently cannot find sufficient numbers of sufficiently qualified entry-level workers who can be retained, become fully productive, and be advanced as older, experienced workers move up or retire.

Why is this so? The WINs partners see that there are numerous causal premises or premises regarding the current state of things that lead to the problems of both poor people and of employers and the gap between them. One way of organizing these premises is to sort them into three groups -- causal premises relating to the disadvantaged, to employers, and to the WFD system. Hence, the main such premises include (but are not limited to):

1. Premises regarding the disadvantaged:
 - a. Most of the disadvantaged lack sufficient "soft" and "hard" skills for employers to offer them "good" entry-level jobs.
 - b. Many have additional barriers such as transportation, childcare, criminal records, substance abuse, immigration status, etc.
 - c. As labor markets tightened in the longest domestic economic expansion in history, as competition intensified with globalization, and as technology rapidly advanced, the "skills bar" has risen sharply, making the disadvantaged even less employable.
 - d. Welfare reform makes many more of the disadvantaged "in play" in labor markets.
2. Premises regarding employers:
 - a. Employers with "good" jobs to offer have little experience with disadvantaged populations and little experience with entry-level workforce development (WFD) activities (because, prior to the present tight labor markets they never really had to deal with either, being able to meet their needs adequately through off-the-street hiring of the non-disadvantaged).

Hence, employers have little sense of an ROI to their investment in such entry-level WFD even if they felt comfortable with what to do on that front and how to do it.

- b. Employers, particularly burgeoning numbers of new, small firms that are the main source of new job creation, frequently do not know their skill needs and lack the internal personnel and training staffs to engage in entry-level WFD.
 - c. Employers with “good” jobs to offer have little experience with the MDTA/CETA/JTPA public job training programs for the disadvantaged; what experience they have had they found dissatisfying; and they do not feel confident that the new WIA will fulfill its promise to be different and better.
 - d. In particular, employers have little experience with the indigenous CBOs representing/serving poor communities (when asked to name CBOs, employers’ first responses tend to be community colleges, Goodwill, etc.)
 - e. Many entry-level positions are, indeed, dead-end by nature; and many are becoming more so as internal career ladders are truncated through corporate de-layering and as contingent work situations and outsourcing of functions grow. Alternative career ladders to greater skills and earnings need to be fashioned within communities.
3. Premises regarding the public sector WFD system.
- a. From its inception in the ‘60s till WIA, the public WFD system has been a second-chance system for the poor; been focused (mainly) on limited preparation and rapid, high-volume placement of low-income people in low-wage, dead-end jobs; and, with a handful of high-profile exceptions, funded a corps of providers skewed toward indigenous CBOs of limited quality (limited in part because the system would not fund high-quality, long-term, more costly preparation).
 - b. Skills training, when provided, was generally not closely attuned to the evolving entry-level needs of employers with “good” entry-level jobs.
 - c. Post-placement and advancement services were not part of the package offered by the public WFD system.
 - d. Employers frequently found the system to be “political” and marked by cronyism.
 - e. For all of these reasons, mainstream employers shunned the system; employer membership on PICs was often of a “paper” quality or limited to those personally concerned with such issues for whatever reasons.
 - f. WIA was to make profound corrections in the WFD system, but it requires an expansion of resources to serve more than the stigmatized poor. It also requires the “real” involvement of state/local elected officials and of the employer community if the new WIA and WIBs are not to fall by default into the hands of the prior JTPA/PIC forces, who may be less likely to fully utilize the new potentials of WIA.

- g. Welfare reform places large amounts of relatively flexible money at the service of entry-level WFD, though it generally resides in different bureaucracies than WIA monies.

The WINs Change Strategy

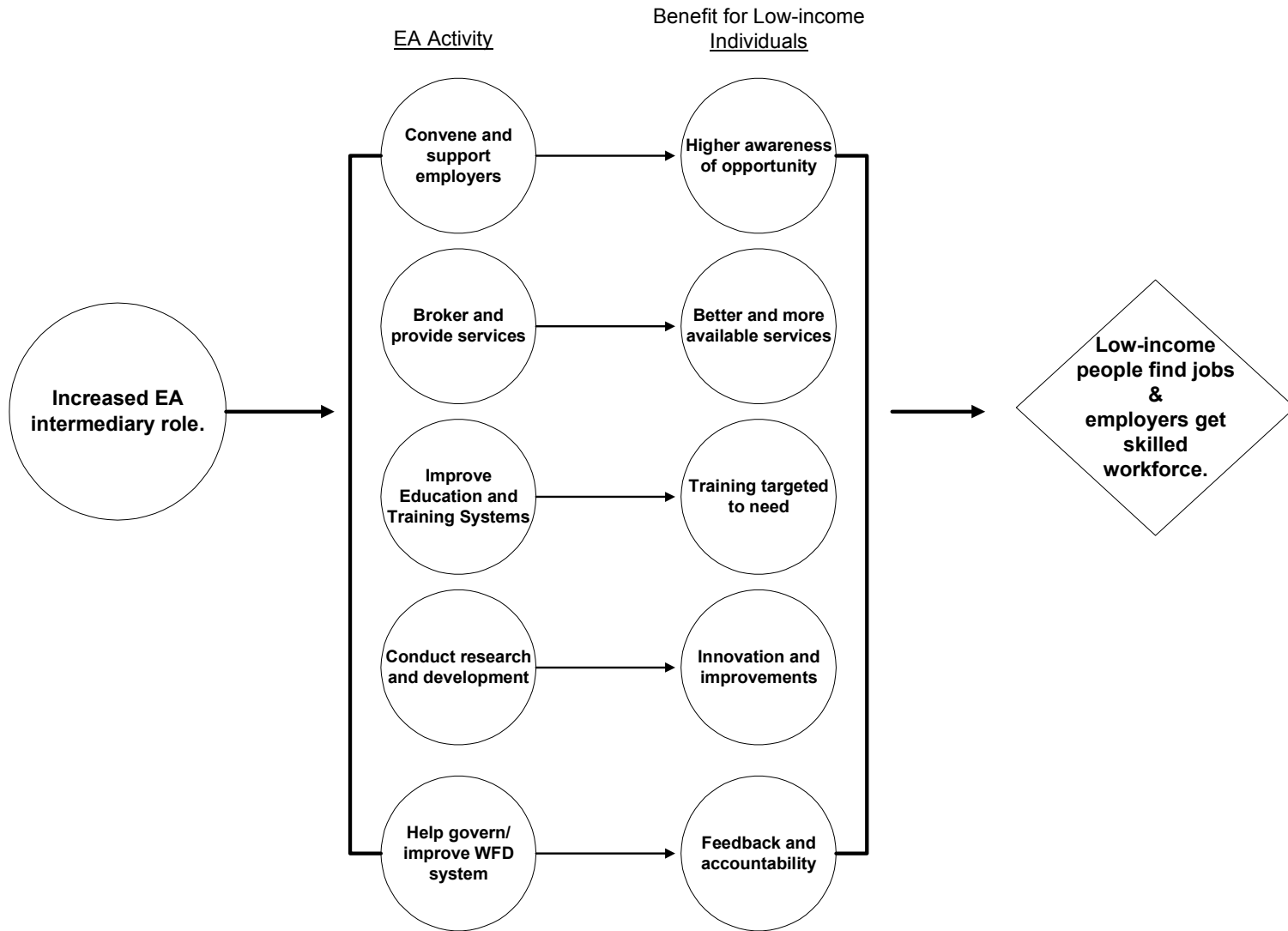
Clearly, there are complex and inter-related factors in the WFD system that prevent it from helping disadvantaged people to gain access to “good” entry-level jobs that can lead to family supporting careers, and from helping employers find sufficient numbers of sufficiently qualified entry-level workers. WINs believes that state and local employer organizations (EOs) can play a unique and valuable role in helping to address these factors, and thus align the WFD system so that it better meets the needs of low-income individuals and employers. Why does WINs believe this? Because EOs are uniquely able to perform the wide variety of activities that must be fulfilled effectively in order to better align the needs of employers with the needs of low-income individuals.

The WINs partnership has found that the following five system activities must be performed well in order to align the WFD system so that it better meets the workforce development needs of low-income individuals and of businesses:

1. Convene and support employers
2. Broker and provide services
3. Improve education, training and supportive services
4. Conduct research and development
5. Help govern/improve the workforce development system.

The following diagram provides a quick overview of how these five system activities create benefits for low income individuals. The table that follows provides a more detailed description of the five activities, the benefits that they create, and examples of EOs that are performing these activities well. Additional data on the EO examples can be found in Appendix A.

Impact of EA Activity



How EO Activities Help Benefit Low Income Individuals

EO Activity	Benefit for Low-income Individuals	Case Examples
<p>Convene and Support Employers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and organize employer involvement in WFD • Gather information on employer demand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employers are more aware of potential sources of attractive employees among low-income individuals • WFD providers working with low-income individuals are more aware of specific employer needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater El Paso Chamber – developed database of required skills sets for 7,400 entry-level jobs • Holyoke Chamber – analyzed skill requirements for paper conversion jobs • CACI – developed multi-sector alliances to focus on WFD issues
<p>Broker and Provide Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Recruitment of entry level workers • Administrative support (e.g., employer of record) • Supportive services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-income individuals have training that is targeted to jobs that are available • Employers are more able to find potential employees that fit their needs • Low-income individuals have supportive services that help them stay in their jobs longer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater El Paso Chamber – developed support for transportation at night and 24-hour child care • CACI –partnered with CBOs to assess and train residents • CBIA – operated Hartford One-Stop center for recruitment
<p>Conduct Research and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop, test, and implement innovations in policy and programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFD system develops innovations that enable it to meet needs of both low-income individuals and employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CBIA – collected and distributed best practices information on hiring/retention of welfare recipients

How EO Activities Help Benefit Low Income Individuals, Cont'd

EO Activity	Benefit for Low-income Individuals	EO Examples
<p>Improve Education, Training and Supportive Services</p> <p>Provide job standards to Education and Training system</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design curricula and other materials • Promote industry credentials/certification • Encourage professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education, training, and supportive service providers better prepare and support low-income individuals to meet employer requirements, retain jobs, and advance in their careers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holyoke Chamber – created curriculum to teach specific occupational skills • San Diego Chamber – started ‘Learn and Earn’ partnership • PII – partnered with CBOs to recruit and prepare youth for graphic arts training • AEDF – partnered with inner city high school to develop Technician Academy
<p>Help Govern/Improve WFD System</p> <p>Participate in E&T policy bodies</p> <p>Advocate for changes to meet employer needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Push for standards of performance, accountability, and continuous improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WFD system is held accountable for meeting needs of both low-income individuals and employers and for continuously improving in effectiveness and efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater Rochester Chamber – staffed and operated Workforce Investment Board • CACI – started legislative proposal to provide tax incentive for training low-skilled workforce

The five types of activities described above are clearly important in aligning supply and demand in ways that meet the needs of both employers and low-income individuals. Research conducted in the first two phases of the WINs partnership work shows that many state and local EOs already perform one or more of these activities. There are also other organizations, especially community-based organizations (CBOs) and community colleges, which perform one or more of these activities in a number of locations. But in far too many locations, at least one, and sometimes more, of these key activities is not being performed by any organization. In order to help improve outcomes for employers and low-income individuals, state and local EOs must develop the capacity and the desire to perform these activities across the US.

The WINs partners are seeking to capitalize on a unique set of trends that have created an opportunity to engage state and local EOs in developing these new capacities. Current economic and demographic trends are creating unprecedented support for employers and employment and training service providers to come together to revamp the current public and private WFD systems. Employers are struggling to find an adequate supply of skilled workers, and many low-skilled and disadvantaged workers do not have access to training and other services that will afford them the skills and other supports needed to obtain, retain and advance in a living wage job. Both those who supply labor and those who demand labor are experiencing significant pressure to reform the current system.

Lessons Learned

WINs has completed Phase I and II in its project to assist EOs to learn how to better align the needs of low income individuals and employers. As part of the work of preparing to design Phase III, Abt Associates conducted an assessment and JFF conducted action research on the WINs and EO activities in Phases I and II. The following are the key lessons learned through their research and assessment:

- A. The WINs project has provided solid evidence that EOs can help align the WFD system in ways that both improve the ability of employers to hire entry-level workers, and improve the ability of low income individuals to get and keep jobs with family-supporting wages.
- B. EOs are most effective in aligning the WFD system when they form strategic partnerships with other providers. These partnerships appear to work best when the EO drives the partnership. When the EO is more passive, and commits less to the partnership, the partnership seems not to have as much impact.
- C. The WINs partnership activities created value for many of the EOs funded (but not all). The activities helped build visible learning and change that is improving outcomes for both employers and low income individuals.

- D. Funding for partnerships is most effective when it is focused on EOs that are “prepared, committed and ready to go”. In such EOs, the employer-members are already aware of WFD issues as a shared problem. There is evidence of a commitment by the EO to aggregate and respond to employer demand for improvements in the WFD system. The EO is getting ready to work, or are already working, on aligning the WFD system to better meet the needs of low income individuals and employers.
- E. The local EOs find that the support and services provided by the national EOs are useful. (Please note that we are including JFF, NAM and the US Chamber all within the heading “national EOs”.) The research provided evidence that the local EOs valued the following activities by the national EOs:
- Listen to their concerns
 - Connect and convene them with their peers
 - Create peer learning opportunities
 - Provide them with small amounts of flexible funding
 - Helps them get started on activities that are difficult or complex to begin

Although the research did not find specific evidence, the WINs partners believe that the EOs also value the following activities performed by the national EOs:

- Gather information on promising practices, and make that information available for them
- Conduct research and testing new models
- Distill all kinds of information for their use
- Provide policy interpretation

- F. EOs appreciate the power in the partnership between NAM and US Chamber of Commerce. They see both organizations as a resource for, and clearinghouse for, information around the country.
- G. The research has given us insight into how local EOs decide to become involved in solving WFD problems. They are persuaded to try to solve WFD problems by the following set of factors:
- The EO knows that its members are very concerned about WFD problems. Solving WFD problems will enable it to improve services to its members.
 - The EO sees the WFD problem as being a community need that no one else is addressing effectively.
 - The EO’s members perceive that the EO has the ability to solve the WFD problem, and want it to do something about the problem.
 - There is a champion within the EO who wants to tackle this problem.
 - The EO can figure out how to get its activities funded.
 - The EO sees a new opportunity to get involved.
 - The EO believes that its actions can help deliver results.
 - The EO is aware of peers working on this problem who are willing to lead and mentor.

It is worth noting here that a considerable proportion of what is needed to persuade EOs to become involved in solving WFD problems is evidence that can be provided by peer mentors, rather than evidence that can only be provided by rigorous research on costs and benefits.

- H. EOs functioning as exemplary WFD intermediaries in addressing the needs of both low income individuals and employers seeking an entry level workforce share the following characteristics:
- EO is working towards a “systems view” of all five roles. It is figuring out problems in the pipeline.
 - EO takes responsibility for improving functioning of one or more of the five “system roles.”
 - The EO is building on its core competencies to create a sustainable approach.

Additional Findings: Abt Associates Assessment

- A. It is difficult to separate out the impact of WINs activities from other activities and changes at the local sites. In most cases, the WFD roles that the EOs are performing are also performed in part by several players, and the employers often cannot distinguish which organization is providing which services. One challenge for the WINs Initiative is to create a system that is transparent to the employers, while at the same time showing impact.
- B. The EOs appreciate the peer support provided. The EOs all loved the peer-mentoring program; it gives them an opportunity to come together as a group to exchange experience and information.
- C. Outcome Measures: There are no meaningful outcome measurements available. The challenge in the next phase will be to develop meaningful metrics that respect variations across sites, but show measures for the whole project. The question will be, “how do you know this is making a difference, and how will the measures encompass the range of activities across sites?”
- D. Marketing/Communication: Many of the employers felt that there should be more emphasis on marketing and increased visibility for the program. The employers were also interested in knowing who else in the community was involved. They wanted to know more about the other organizations that are involved with the WINs Initiative.
- E. Public policy is constantly changing and is affecting the sites in different ways. The question becomes, where will the leadership for the policy changes come from? Public policy is an area that the sites need the most assistance with interpretation and tips on navigating through the system. The disabled community will be the next big change that employers will need to address. This is a pipeline issue that WINs should look at as well.

Additional Findings: JFF Action Research

- A. Findings about EO activities
 - 1) Organizing Employers: JFF found that 5 out of the 8 sites have done a good job in organizing employers together and had successfully aggregated demand. Holyoke, El Paso, CACI, CBIA and San Diego have all worked closely with employers to help meet their workforce development needs.
 - 2) Intermediary Functions: In all the sites it was clear that the EOs have taken on intermediary roles, and that this has helped to solve some of the WFD problems.
 - 3) Strategic partnership: All 8 sites formed strategic partnerships with supply side organizations, like schools, colleges and CBOs; 4 sites formed partnerships with a single organization, while 4 sites formed multiple partnerships. In most cases the state organizations have developed multiple partnerships with trade associations and other organizations.

- B. Findings about success factors. There was greater success in sites where:
 - 1) The WINs Initiative was demand-driven
 - 2) Employer interest preceded and helped to shape the WINs grant
 - 3) Employers understood that their workforce need matched the populations targeted by WINs
 - 4) There was evidence of “aggregation” of employer demand by the EO before the WINs grant
 - 5) There was evidence of commitment from the sites, including: setting up committees, developing a business plan and appointing senior managers to run the program.
 - 6) The closer the WINs Initiative was to employers, the better the results.

- C. Findings about EO competencies and infrastructure:
 - 1) Data tracking and measurements: In order to be successful, EOs need to track results for continued support. There is a tension between EOs and supply side partners over which organization should track this data. The WINs partners felt that the EOs should develop internal capacity to track and measure outcomes. The partners felt that if the EOs took an active role in tracking the information, they would begin to “own” the process.
 - 2) Staffing capacity: It is key to have people on staff at the EOs who are familiar with workforce development issues.
 - 3) Financial resources: In most of the sites, the EOs did not start with their own resources. Funding came from an outside source.

Vision and Goals for Phase III

The WINs partners have developed the following vision and goals for Phase III:

Vision for Phase III:

At the end of Phase III, WINs will have:

- the experience, leadership and national support capacity to go to scale;
- results sufficient to convince policy- makers, funders, and employers of the value of the EO intermediary role; and
- a clearer strategy for sustaining the EO intermediary role.

Goals for Phase III:

1. A critical number of exemplary intermediaries* with successful results for firms and individuals (deepening).
2. A critical mass of EOs entering or developing workforce development intermediary roles (broadening).
3. A knowledge bank of good practices and tested strategies available to EOs at all levels of development to help them improve practices.
4. Enough evidence to withstand the test of skeptics.
5. Funding/economic strategy that is persuasive to all funding sources.
6. Public policy strategy and recommendations informed by WINs experience.
7. Public sector leaders who will champion the overall goals of WINs.

* EOs defined as exemplary intermediaries have the following characteristics:

- Have developed a “systems view.”
- Take responsibility for improving functioning of one or more of the “system roles.”
- Build on core competencies to create a sustainable approach.

The Phase III strategies and activities to achieve these goals are described in detail in the accompanying Proposed Integrated Approach document.

Indicators of Progress

Indicators of Progress

The WINs partners have drafted the following indicators of progress for their work in Phase III. They will work closely with Abt Associates in developing an evaluation plan, which will specify which indicators will be tracked, and how the evaluation will be performed.

The progress indicators are divided into two groups. The first group includes outcome indicators: measures that show directly whether WINs has been successful in achieving its long-term goals. The second group includes process indicators: measures that show whether WINs is successfully creating the kinds of systems changes that it believes will

lead in the long run to positive changes in the outcomes. Both groups of indicators are further subdivided into employer, low income individual, and employer organization indicators.

Outcome Indicators

Outcome Indicators: Employer

- ◆ Greater percentage of qualified applicants for entry-level jobs
- ◆ Lower turnover
- ◆ Increased number of people in the pipeline above entry-level
- ◆ Lower recruitment cost
- ◆ Training systems that are accountable to employer demand.

Outcome Indicators: Low-income Individuals

- ◆ More placements into “family supporting” jobs
- ◆ Higher retention rate
- ◆ Higher rates of advancements into position with higher wages and full benefit coverage.

Process Indicators

Process Indicators: Employer

- ◆ More/better Employer-driven training
- ◆ More pre and post employment consulting and supports around low-income individuals
- ◆ Better employer HR practices
- ◆ Better/more consulting and supports around LII
- ◆ Entry level job standards are created or improved

Process Indicators: Individual

- ◆ More external support for low-income people to stay in jobs and advance

Process Indicators: EO

- ◆ More EO partnerships to address WFD gaps
- ◆ EO undertakes changes to take on intermediary role
- ◆ More employers take on the task of improving the WFD system
- ◆ More EOs take on intermediary role

Growing to Scale and Sustainability

While the demonstration sites have begun to show interesting and positive results, the true payoff for both businesses and low-income individuals can only occur when this approach moves from a handful of demonstration sites to a strategy employed by

hundreds of state and local EOs across the country. In order for this to happen, the WINs strategy must both achieve sustainable scale across the national EOs, and must achieve sustainable scale within hundreds of local communities.

Achieving sustainability and scale among state or local EOs

In order to build a self-sustaining institutionalization of these activities among state or local EOs, each state or local EO must determine that this activity creates value for its members. Since the state or local EOs exist to serve their members, which are primarily small and medium sized businesses in their regions, this means that the activities involved in aligning the labor market systems must be perceived as creating value for the small and medium sized businesses in the area. The eight demonstration sites give evidence that this is so in their regions, but what's true in Tempe isn't necessarily true in Topeka. Each state or local EO will be looking for positive feedback from its members, such as:

- (1) Members compliment the EO on the activities that the EO is performing, or (more likely) complain if the activities are interrupted or delayed.
- (2) Employers come to expect those activities from EOs and look to them as an important way to help meet their labor needs.
- (3) The EO activities are seen by other organizations in the labor market as being important to the smooth functioning of the system.
- (4) Most importantly, firms are willing to pay at least a portion of the cost for providing the services, and the impact on membership is so positive that EOs are willing to fundraise for the balance of the cost, or to dedicate general funds for that use.

If these results are achieved, then the state or local EO will most likely institutionalize this activity, which means that it will provide this activity with dedicated funding and staffing. Funding for the activity can come from a combination of fees for services, member fees, foundation grants, public sector grants, and grants or support from local corporations and wealthy individuals. Based on the experience with the demonstration sites, the WINs partners estimate that a typical site would take between 3-5 years to institutionalize these activities.

Achieving sustainability and scale among national EOs

In order to achieve sustainability and scale among national EOs, the activity must come to be seen as essential by a critical mass of members of the national EOs. In order to attain critical mass, playing an intermediary role must both come to have breadth and depth throughout each EO's membership. It must have breadth in that a significant proportion of the membership must be engaged in the activity. It must have depth in that the members that are engaged in the activity see it as adding significant value to their organization, and therefore as being worthy of time and attention. Once this happens, playing an intermediary role will become an accepted practice for the membership, and they will demand services from the national EOs to support this practice. At this point, best practices, innovations, and strategies for improving the role of labor market intermediary will be spread by USC, NAM, and JFF through a wide range of activities, including conferences, publications, Web pages, peer support networks, and the like.

As with the state and local EOs, the national EOs will institutionalize this activity once they perceive that their members really value the services. Sources of funding to pay for these services include fees for services, member dues, foundation grants, federal funding, grants from individuals and special contribution funds from the national membership.

Conclusion

This Theory of Change has presented the WINs' partners views on how to improve the functioning of the WFD system, so that it better meets the needs of both low income individuals seeking family-supporting jobs and of employers seeking an entry-level workforce. It started with a description of the whole WFD system, and the array of factors that are causing the WFD system to fail to adequately meet the needs of low income individuals and of employers. It then presented its central thesis: that EOs are uniquely able to address these factors by diagnosing system problems and taking on one or more of the five system activities. It reviewed the lessons learned from Phase I and II of the WINs project, and presented the vision and goals for Phase III. The WINs partners are firmly convinced that the activities of Phase III, if done well, can position EOs to be ready to perform WFD intermediary roles at scale and in a sustainable way across the United States.

Appendix A: Case Examples

The following brief descriptions illustrate the way in which local Employer Organizations have implemented these activities in ways that address the needs of both businesses and low-income people in their area. Background information is provided for each site, followed by a table with specific examples of the activities that each site has performed along with the benefits to low-income individuals.

1. **Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce:** El Paso's long-term need is to provide an employer-driven, flexible training system to meet the needs of the business community and its employees. In response to this need, Greater El Paso Chamber began work on a partnership to develop a one-stop technical training and service center. To date this has included performing the following role in order to improve the local WFD system:
 - ◆ Convene and support employers: El Paso Chamber of Commerce is assuming a leadership role in education reform and the school-to-work transition. This is in response to a survey of local businesses that found that 80% of businesses felt that the local schools were not doing a good job of preparing students for work. As public transportation and childcare have emerged as significant barriers to employment, the Chamber also is convening employers to validate the need for transportation at night and is working with three childcare providers and employers to make 24-hour childcare economically feasible. The Chamber also is addressing English-as-a-Second-Language issues and its impact on workforce development.
 - ◆ Broker and provide services: The Chamber has stepped into an operational role needed to fill the leadership void, as in its willingness to fund (\$1.6 million from the Chamber Foundation), develop and operate a one-stop technical training and services center. To support El Paso's PREP grant, the Chamber took on the responsibility for job development, customized training, and on-the-job training. In 6 months, it identified and/or developed 7,871 full-time jobs with benefits and placed 477 individuals into jobs.
 - ◆ Help to govern: Recently, the Chamber was asked by the Workforce Development Board to give recommendations for the structure of the new employer One-stop Center. These 12 recommendations are expected to be incorporated into the RFP for a new operator beginning July 2001. Currently, a gap exists between employer's urgency to fill workforce needs and a public system characterized by regulations and delays. The Chamber is working as an intermediary to lessen this gap.

2. **Holyoke Chamber of Commerce:** In 1987, the Chamber and the City of Holyoke Employment Partnership (HEP) was formed in response to employers' difficulty in finding qualified employees and the realization that most people seeking entry-level work did not have the necessary education and skills. The

mission of HEP is to identify an adequate supply of qualified employees to satisfy the needs of Holyoke's economy. The Holyoke Chamber has taken on the following roles:

- ◆ Convene and support: Holyoke Chamber of Commerce began "Working Knowledge," a program to develop qualified workers who meet the needs of Holyoke's economy, which include the manufacturing and health care sectors. In designing the program, the Chamber determined that the major barrier was the skill level of entry-level workers. Working with two-selected Employment Market Clusters (EMC), the Chamber selected critical occupations common to EMC employers and for which recruiting and retaining workers had been difficult. These positions were analyzed and profiled using nationally recognized assessment tools such as ACT Work Keys Systems and DACUM process to determine the precise skills required for adequate job performance.
 - ◆ Broker and provide services: Holyoke Chamber of Commerce has built an effective collaboration among partners, successfully recruited participants and employers, moved clients through customized curricula, initiated train-the-trainer strategies and facilitated placement of applicants in jobs. Manufacturers pay \$150 for each applicant screening. The Chamber has recruited incumbent workers, welfare recipients, disadvantaged high school students, high school dropouts and minorities. Participants are individually assessed using standard assessment tools to determine gaps between the participant's skills and the profiled jobs. Based on the assessment, individual learning plans are developed for each participant.
 - ◆ Improve education: The Chamber used results from work skill analysis and consultation with employers to create a curriculum specifically designed for adult learners, which teaches the essential occupational skills. The curriculum is contextual, using specific situations, language, math, problem solving, ethics, tools and technology used in critical occupations.
3. **San Diego**: The Chamber consolidated its workforce development efforts under the Greater San Diego Chamber of Commerce Foundation. The Business Roundtable for Education (BRE) falls under the Foundation's umbrella.
- ◆ Improve education: The Chamber is working very closely with the local school district to help improve the education system. It has formed a partnership in order to offer students summer internships. It also has worked with the charter school system. The following brief description provides more details about both programs:
 - **Learn and Earn Partnership**: The summer employer paid internship program, Learn And Earn, has now become a partnership between the San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce Foundation and the San Diego Workforce Partnership. Over the past three years the program helped place 600 students into private employer-paid internships in more than 175

businesses. Internship development focuses on connecting students to leading and emerging business sectors, which include biotechnology, business and finance, hospitality and tourism, manufacturing, engineering and other high tech jobs. In 1999 and 2000, 300 students each year worked at 200 businesses as paid interns, with a clear focus on exploring career interests while participating in the day-to-day operation of the business.

- Charter School: The Business Roundtable for Education has been actively involved in establishing four model charter schools in the San Diego area. Foundation funds have assisted charter schools develop strategic business plans, provided legal counsel when necessary and assisted with data collection for school accountability. Charter school models include the Charter School of San Diego, which focuses on students who have the potential of dropping out of school. The Process School, located on the campus of the University of California San Diego, opened in 1999. The School focuses on first generation college-bound students who have high potential, but need additional academic support.
 - ◆ Help to govern: Business Roundtable for Education members initiated, monitored and influenced federal and state legislation that achieves strategic educational goals, particularly in the area of charter schools. The BRE is also concerned with developing accountability measurements and standards for students and teachers.
4. **Minneapolis** – As an intermediary, Employers Association, Inc. (EA), created and coordinated work-based learning opportunities for students in their local school district.
- Broker and Provide service: EA played a key role as facilitator between the schools and employers to implement a variety of school-to-work-activities. EA has collaborated with Robbinsdale Area School district to create an employer-based, -led and -staffed intermediary/clearinghouse. EA has ensured that students gain valuable workplace experience that is linked to the subjects they are learning in the classroom. In the first year, the association concentrated on organizing employers to support the school-to-career program. They organized job fairs, career awareness activities, and work based learning opportunities for teachers and students. AE is now shifting its focus from school-to-work activities to training that addresses welfare-to-work needs.
5. **Detroit** - American Society of Employers (ASE) is working to address the need for skilled workers in South Michigan. While manufacturing is booming in South Michigan, employers are having difficulty finding sufficient machine operators and machinist/trainee or entry-level workers. The American Society of Employers' members were complaining that they had a high number of vacancies. At the same time the West Side Hispanic Enterprise Zone has the highest unemployment rate in Detroit. ASE has worked to bridge the gap between employers and low-income individuals by doing the following:

- ◆ Broker and provide services. ASE recognized its role in addressing employer needs by forging partnerships with education and community-based organizations. The association links employers to community-based organizations providing workforce development services. The WINs project represents ASE's first attempt to work directly with a community-based organization to train and place entry-level workers. To date, over 70 employers have become active in the process through informational sessions arranged by ASE, as well as a recruiting session that included students and employers. ASE has worked to determine what skill sets will be required in the future and provide feedback to education and training providers.

ASE is collaborating with the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation (DHDC), Wayne State University and Henry Ford Community College as part of the Manufacturing Technology Bridge program of Southwest Detroit. The program supports the development of an urban, high-technology workforce through the coordinated efforts of business, community-based organizations, community colleges and university technology programs. With the WINs grant ASE was able to fund the work of a job developer at DHDC. Young adults in and out of work were recruited and completed a 3-month training program. Once they completed the training DHDC and ASE helped place them in jobs by holding job fairs with ASE member organizations. In order to continue their work, ASE has received additional funding from National Science Foundation. The relationship is excellent and the association members are depending on ASE for new trained/skilled workers.

This project represents a classic partnership where the community college, employers and CBOs have come together to represent employer needs to develop curriculum, train young adult in the skills needed and then place individuals in good paying jobs. ASE has established a partnership with Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation, which has helped to incorporate, staff and assist in setting up funding for the Bridge program of pre-employment and skills training for a largely Hispanic community. The result has been that most people that go through the program are placed in good-paying manufacturing jobs. The first classes of approximately 40 students were all placed in jobs and there are many more in the pipeline. ASE has also replicated the program on the east side of Detroit with another CBO.

6. **Denver** - Colorado Association of Commerce and Industry Foundation (CACI) strategy is to develop and strengthen the capacity of local business organizations and groups of firms to address the workforce development needs of their manufacturers. Denver is a major manufacturing center, where 4,600 people out of a population of 13,000 are in manufacturing jobs. CACI is working with two employer-driven workforce development consortia, which include the Montrose Manufacturing Association (MMA) and the employers who support the Transformations Project at the Higher Education and Advanced Technology

(HEAT) Center in Lowry. In Montrose, the WINs grant has been a catalyst for the Montrose Manufacturing Association to facilitate communication and activities among stakeholders in WFD issues. MMA's has focused on linking employers and businesses through school-to-career activities and initiating the Work Keys system; installing Key Train software (self-paced, skill-building) at several area employers; assessing skill levels of workers with Work Keys Assessments, and profiling jobs at local businesses. The following describes the activities that CACI has performed:

- ◆ Convene and support: Through the partnership between CACI and Montrose Manufacturing Association, CACI has learned about the most effective methods that employer organizations are using in workforce development. MMA has been very active in bringing together employers to become involved in workforce development issues. MMA's recent activities include: facilitating a supervisory skills course at Mesa State College for supervisors at local employers; training employers on use of Pathfinders (on-line job openings/resources); implementing Key Train at several employers; job profiling of local employers; and employee assessments using the Work Keys system. In an effort to raise awareness around WFD issues, representatives of MMA took a two-day field trip to visit community colleges, manufacturers and economic development organizations. MMA is promoting the area's workforce development through alliances with the Montrose Chamber of Commerce, the Montrose Economic Development council, Mesa State College and the Montrose School-to-Career Partnership.
- ◆ Help to govern: CACI formed a special policy committee, which focused on workforce development for disadvantaged and the workforce in general. CACI's special committee went to their legislature with a proposal that would give a tax stipend/advantage to small companies who would train their lowest level of workers on technology. They proposed that companies receive a \$1,000 tax advantage. Although the legislation did not go through, the initiative is still alive and the committee is still trying to work through the legislator to develop funding for training. MMA has also been a catalyst in bringing together the area's workforce development stakeholders such as the Montrose School-to-Career Partnership, the Montrose Chamber of Commerce, the Montrose Economic Development Council, Mesa State College, the local WIB, the Workforce Development Center, and the local voc-tech school.
- ◆ Improve education, training and supportive services: The Montrose Manufacturing Association is a major funder of, and closely linked to the local school-to-career program. MMA is very involved in many of their activities, such as business tours of schools, student and teacher tours of businesses, job shadowing, career fairs, and classroom speakers. MMA has also help fund Discover, the program's online career planning system at local schools. MMA also facilitated an alliance between a local employer and Mesa State College to develop a new web-based composites curriculum.

- ◆ Broker and Provide Services: CACI funded Transformations, a local CBO, which is designed to help minority women learn basic skills to find a job. They also funded a small manufacturing association to help assess the skills of disadvantaged people in the community. The funding helped organization set up a program to assess skills of people in the area. The organization then used Work-Train, which is a model that identifies specific areas in which participants need training, resulting in dozens of placements into new jobs with good benefits and a career ladder.

7. **Connecticut** - Connecticut Business & Industry Association (CBIA):

CBIA is a good example of an EO that playing a key role in the local WFD systems by providing advice and information to members about hiring welfare recipients, school-to-career; organizing training for incumbent workers and those who are looking for jobs; setting job standards for 8 industries in CT and making those standards available to trainers; and they also are members of the state Workforce Development Board.

Improve education: For 5 years, CBIA has helped to transform the most troubled inner city high school in Hartford. CBIA used the funding from the WINs grant to intensify the last phase of their 5-year effort to transform Hartford Public High School from a crime ridden, poorly performing school to a model school with a strong career focus and a successful graduation and job placement rate for its students. CBIA organized financial support and business involvement in upgrading the curriculum and implemented a technologies academy at the school.

Through the ScanTek program, students use technology to learn the skills necessary for entry-level jobs in computer hardware maintenance and networking. The association has hired a full-time person who works in the high school to help organize partnerships between the school and local businesses. At the end of the program 45% of students going through the program graduated from high school, compared to 36% of those students who of did not go through the program. CBIA is also working closely with the director of the school's career center to host monthly events focusing on CBIA's eight career clusters. Each month they will select a different career cluster as a theme and invite the school will invite a speaker from those industries to present, offer sites visits to the companies and job shadowing opportunities.

- ◆ Convene and support: CBIA has two programs that work with employers around workforce development, which include the following:
 1. Under contract with the State Social Service department, CBIA organized small manufacturers to hire welfare recipients and experiment with new and improved hiring / retention techniques. CBIA started its work in this area by working with a group of employers to look at their current hiring / retention practices. They then researched hiring/retention practices around the country for welfare recipients. After compiling the research, CBIA then offered orientation for supervisors in effective practices of working with welfare recipients. CBIA found that those firms that participated in the orientation program and used the new practices significantly improved

their retention rates. CBIA also offered each firm outside help to address childcare and other needs, and provided mentoring for new hirers and leadership coaching for the supervisors.

2. Under the state Labor Department Contract, CBIA organized a consortium of small businesses in Bridgeport and Danbury to work together on the education and skill needs of entry-level disadvantaged incumbent employees. CBIA pulled businesses in the area together to aggregate their skill and training needs. They connected these employers to community college and other training organizations, which could provide training that was subsidized by state grants. Once the employers determined who needed training in each organization, they placed them in training programs so they can acquire the skills required to be more productive and eventually advance in their present position. In this case, the State of Connecticut understands that small businesses need help with meeting the training needs of their employees. Through this program, CBIA has helped to address the needs of the employer and employee in a cost effective way.
 - ◆ Brokering services: CBIA has been asked by Hartford Workforce Investment Board to accept a contract to operate the Hartford One-stop Center for recruitment and replacement funded by Workforce Investment act Fund. They have agreed to do this and will start shortly.
 - ◆ Conduct research: CBIA collected best practices models around the country on hiring/retention of welfare recipients. The information helped in the design of an orientation program for supervisors working with welfare recipients.

8. **Chicago** - Printing Industry of Illinois and Indiana (PII) and Associated Equipment Distributor Foundation

- ◆ Improve education, training and supportive services: In the Chicago area there are two employer associations that have been working to improve education, training and supportive services, which include:
 1. The *Printing Industry of Illinois and Indiana Association* (PII) has been working with schools to design curriculum. The biggest industry in Illinois is printing and it is mostly comprised of small firms with 25-50 employees. In Illinois and Indiana printers are facing serious workforce vacancies. In response to the employers' need for a trained workforce, PII established a partnership with two CBOs located in Chicago that provide services for the Black and Hispanic inner city neighborhoods. The CBOs recruit and prepare young residents to enter basic graphic arts program at Martin Luther King Community College in Chicago. At the end of the program they are placed in well paid printing jobs. The first class ended with 30 graduates who all have been placed in jobs. The second class is in the pipeline. NAM is helping PII draft a proposal for a second tier, which will provide advanced training for entry-level employees. The program will design curriculum for an Associate of Arts degree in graphic arts, which will

help those entry-level employees upgrade their skill level and move into better paying positions.

2. *Associated Equipment Distributor Foundation (AEDF)*, also in Chicago, is an association for manufacturers and dealers of heavy construction equipment, such as EG, Caterpillar. The members of this association were confronting a serious need for repair and maintenance technicians. In response, AEDF established a partnership with Gage Park High School, in an inner city Hispanic neighborhood of Chicago, to set up a rigorous four-year Equipment Technician Academy. The intensive program included career guidance, parental contracts to assist in homework, an internship in the industry a rigorous curriculum based on industry job standards and a guarantee of employment upon graduation. The first class graduated in the spring of 2000, with approximately 80 students; most of the graduates went on to college or employment. Graduates of this program ranked among the top tier with other students in their high school. Four of the graduates from the Academy were listed in a publication among the 10 top Hispanic students around the country

9. Rochester - Industrial Management Council and Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce

- ◆ Help to govern: In Rochester, Industrial Management Council, a NAM affiliate, along with Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce joined forces to establish a 501(c) 3 to staff and operate the Workforce Investment Board for the city of Rochester and the surrounding Monroe County. The CEOs from both organizations are co-chairs of the 501(c) 3. New York State Department of Labor is supporting and closely watching the model for possible replication. The two leaders of the employer organizations decided to staff and operate the WIB together based on the many complaints they were hearing from their members that the WIB was not meeting their needs and that the system was too ‘political.’ They decided to take advantage of new legislation that enabled them to operate the workforce development system. This is the first case where the business community is “taking” over and operating the Workforce Investment Board.