

## STRATEGIC AREAS OF FOCUS 2002 THRU 2004

**VISION:** Merced County's workforce investment system will keep pace with new growth, the emerging economy, and the ever changing needs of the employers by creating a better educated, highly skilled workforce that's capable, prepared, and thoroughly knowledgeable.

**MISSION:** [consider if the WIB needs one]

**ROLE:** The WIB will play several roles in relationship to the vision and mission. We will be a **community facilitator and convener** to identify issues and collectively solve problems with community partners in furtherance of our mission. We will be seen as an **educator** for quality practices and strategic innovation. We will **catalyze change** in the community as we move toward making the workforce better prepared. And we will **energize the community** to become engaged in meeting the workforce and economic development challenges that are facing Merced County.

### **CURRENT GOALS - 2000-2002:**

**Goal One:** Improve the economic performance of Merced County to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley

**Goal Two:** Improve the educational job skills of the local workforce including youth to exceed the average of the San Joaquin Valley and to meet the needs of employers

**Goal Three:** Align and coordinate strategic plans and goals with that of education, economic development organizations, and other community workforce development organizations

**Goal Four:** Provide support to the Youth Council to implement the Council's role, vision, mission statement, and strategic goals for all youth in Merced County

***STRATEGIC DIRECTION - 2002-2004:***

The following strategic directions set our areas of focus and priority for the next two years, primarily falling within Goal One and Goal Two.

- Goal One** Respond to business needs by targeting 3-5 of the area's industries and work with those specific industries to develop emerging and current worker skills and assist the industry to develop worker retention strategies. Also assist the specified industries with developing plans to expand and attract new workers.
- Goal Two** Establish the WIB as an economic development partner by developing workforce strategies aligned to community economic development initiatives.
- Goal Three** Influence the education system, through building formal relationships, to become responsive to business skill needs and work to design and implement strategies that promote student achievement and graduation
- Goal Four** Become an active advocacy voice and take political action on workforce development issues at the local, state and national level

## **ACTION PLAN**

**Strategic Area One:** Respond to business needs by targeting 3-5 of the areas industry's and work with those specific industries to develop emerging and current worker skills and assist the industry to develop worker retention strategies. Also assist the specified industries with developing plans to expand and attract new workers.

### **Sample Action Steps:**

1. Evaluate the local area businesses and industries to identify which industries to target based on selected criteria (e.g., growth of the industry, economic development priorities for broadening the economic base in the County, wages, career opportunities, etc.)
2. Thoroughly understand the job needs of each selected industry; conduct sector analysis and determine future industries jobs in conjunction with economic development
3. Determine skill requirements over the next 5 years of future jobs and determine what educational and vocational programs will be necessary to supply a ready workforce
4. Conduct an analysis of current educational and vocational programs against the future job and skill needs and evaluate whether they are/can be aligned
5. Develop an action plan to meet education and training needs with employers, educational institutions and the WIB
6. Measure Critical Outcomes

**Strategic Area Two:** Establish the WIB as an economic development partner by developing workforce strategies aligned to community economic development initiatives.

### **Sample Strategic Steps**

1. Build champions in the business community to advocate with new businesses and promote economic assets
2. Create Business Council as a part of the WIB

**Strategic Area Three:** Influence the education system, through building formal relationships, to become responsive to business skill needs and work to design and implement strategies that promote student achievement and graduation.

**Sample Action Steps:**

1. Develop key talking points that consolidates all the evaluative reports into a compelling case for change that will help educators recognize the need to change and easily identify business skill needs
2. Utilize the WIB Business Council to communicate needs to education community
3. Create teacher ‘externships’ in industry to make educators more aware of how business is done in businesses and the skills required
4. Promote the value (in terms of increased wages over a working lifetime) of graduating from high school and receiving some post-secondary education

**Strategic Area Four:** Become an active advocacy voice and take political action on workforce development issues at the local, state and national level.

**Sample Action Steps:**

1. Educate the WIB on what Representative and Senators from CA are on which Committees that influence workforce issues
2. Craft the message and stories to tell
3. Build relationships with key staff (local and national) of selected Congressional Representatives; meet with them to present the WIB as available to provide whatever information they need on the success and challenges of workforce development
4. Identify opportunities to testify about workforce issues
5. Create a community forum on workforce development and invite key Congressional representatives and their staff
6. Produce an annual report that is widely distributed

## **MERCED COUNTY WIB OPERATING PRINCIPLES**

The following principles define the way the WIB operates with regard to the goals and strategies identified. The core processes employed by the organization to accomplish the goals will operate in the following fashion.

- The WIB operates at a strategic level, setting policies and direction around our priority areas of focus. Staff and partners develop and implement the operational and tactical procedures and processes required to carry out the plans.
- The WIB carries out its work through Standing Committees and Task Groups. Standing Committees have ongoing oversight for processes and procedures that are continual. Task Groups are appointed by the Chair to produce a specific product or recommendation. The Task Group disbands when the work is complete.
- The WIB, as a Committee of the whole, develops initiatives and concepts that are then assigned to standing committees or task groups to further develop the direction and policy. The WIB strives to accept recommendations from Committees and to not rethink, redo, or otherwise replicate at a full WIB meeting, the dialogue that has gone on previously in a Committee/Task Group.
- Board committees are assigned to reinforce the wholeness of the board's job and to never interfere with delegation from the WIB to the Executive Director.
- Board committees are to help the board do its job by preparing policy alternatives and implications for board deliberations.
- Board committees may not exercise authority over staff. The Executive Director receives direction from the WIB Chair and Executive Committee and delegates staff as appropriate.

### ***DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN***

#### **At two years:**

- Ensure that all programs are aligned to targeted industry clusters
- Businesses report that educational and vocational training is providing an applicant pool that meets their skill needs
- Demonstrate effectiveness in contributing to the community's economic development initiatives.
- The one-stop(s) are effective and making an impact in the community