

# **Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County: Board Sustainability Plan**

## **Statement of Purpose**

One of the stated strategic goals of the Workforce Development Board (WDB) is to “strengthen a diverse, active, and full board.” To ensure a healthy and productive board, as well as maintain leadership bench strength, we must have well-defined processes, roles and responsibilities to support new member outreach, recruitment and on-boarding, and to provide continuous education and development for all board members. This Sustainability Plan provides a framework for ensuring board sustainability and productive board outcomes for the future.

## **PART ONE: OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT**

### **New Board Member Selection**

Board staff and officers will evaluate board vacancies and define the optimum characteristics they are seeking in potential new members, including industry representation, business size and location. They may also refer to the Board Characteristics Matrix to identify talent and experience gaps that they are seeking to fill in order to ensure that the Board maintains a well-rounded perspective.

The Youth Council is the only WDB committee that is mandated under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Youth Council composition includes some general categories that are not represented on the Workforce Development Board. [See attachment for Youth Council seats.] Board staff, Youth Council leaders and WDB officers will evaluate Youth Council vacancies and recruit new members who bring the diverse skills, knowledge, experience and perspectives to ensure a productive well-rounded group.

### **Key Recruitment Strategies**

The WDB will utilize a variety of strategies to attract perspective board members. The most successful strategies encompass a blended approach of community advocacy and education, professional networking, collaborative partnerships, and strategic promotion of the programs and services of the WDB.

### **Personal Referrals**

One of the most effective recruitment strategies is asking for referrals from current board members. Ideally, Board members would have a clear understanding of the desired characteristics and would suggest colleagues who best match the WDB’s targeted needs. When board members identify someone who is interested in serving on the WDB, they will provide contact information to Board staff. The staff will then follow up to begin the application process with the candidate.

### **Targeted Recruitment**

Board staff and WDB officers deploy this strategy by targeting existing experience, skill and demographic gaps and strategically aiming to fill the gaps. The Board is presently in the process of reviewing those industry sectors that are the primary economic drivers in our service area. Attracting industry leaders who represent one or more of these primary sectors is a prime recruitment objective.

The WDB is committed to having high level decision makers on the Board who are also available and passionate about the Board’s work. Targeted recruitment efforts by staff will seek to ensure equitable representation of the

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businesses and workforce needs in Central, East and West County, balance large business perspectives with small and mid-sized business perspectives and reflect the socio-economic make-up of the workforce.

### Recruitment and Selection Process

#### 1. Pre-Screening

Staff will call interested board applicants, those who are referred or who independently contact the WDB, to:

- Provide initial information
- Ascertain their interest in serving on the WDB
- Assure that they meet the minimum requirements of the open seat

Pre-screening phone interviews are an important first step to ensure that everyone's expectations are carefully managed and the applicant's time is respected.

#### 2. Send Application Package

After this initial screening, staff will send electronically or mail the recruitment packet that includes the following:

- Letter on WDB letterhead
- WDB member application form
- WDB brochure
- WDB staff business card

#### 3. Application Follow-Up

Within two weeks of sending the application package, staff will follow-up with a phone call to ensure materials have been received, field any questions, and clarify next steps in moving forward.

If the applicant is interested but not ready to make a commitment, staff may offer the applicant an opportunity to talk to a current Board member.

If the applicant is interested in interviewing a board member, staff will facilitate an interview with 1) the person who made the initial referral, 2) a board member that they may already know, or 3) one of the WDB officers.

#### 4. Completion of Application Packet

Staff will track applications to ensure completion in a timely manner. All **applications must be accompanied by a letter of support** from a business, professional association, or related affiliation that can attest to the applicant's professionalism and relevant background. Staff will then call the applicant to notify them that paperwork has been received and will explain the next steps in process.

### New Board Member Selection Process

1. Staff will set up interviews with qualified board candidates. Youth Council seats will be filled based on interviews conducted by co-chair(s) and/or staff to the WDB.
2. Staff will debrief the interviews and determine which candidates best meet the desired characteristics for the WDB. They will forward those applications to the Executive Committee for review and approval at its next regularly scheduled meeting.

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For those applicants who are not selected, staff will personally contact them and thank them for their interest and for applying.

3. The Executive Committee action will in turn move the appointment to the Board of Supervisors Internal Operations Committee.
4. Seat assignments will be listed in the staff report and will be reviewed against the Maddy Book data to ensure that assignment will maximize service time for each incoming Board member.
5. The candidate recommendations for categories specific to the Youth Council will be forwarded to the Executive Committee as above. Action by the Executive Committee constitutes final appointment to the Youth Council.

### **Board of Supervisors Appointment**

The Board Secretary will note the date of WDB action. The Secretary will then send application, letter of support, copy of staff report and action date, and the home address and contact number of the nominee to the Clerk of the BOS. The Clerk of the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors (BOS) will place the nomination on the agenda of the next available Internal Operations meeting. Once the nomination is approved, it is then calendared for the next available BOS agenda.

### **Notification of New Board Members**

A designated WDB staff member will review BOS minutes regularly to ascertain the specific date that each Board member is officially seated and will note this date in the tracking log. Once this has occurred, an e-mail will be sent to the new Board member congratulating them on his or her nomination and notifying them of the next scheduled orientation session for new members and upcoming meetings of the WDB, noting specifically if a full board meeting is imminent.

[**NOTE:** Minutes for the next Board meeting will be sent to members who are pending BOS appointment in order to keep them engaged and up to speed on board activities.]

## **PART TWO: FIRST 100 DAYS, NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING**

### **1) New Member Workshop**

Staff will contact new WDB and Youth Council members to invite them to a **New Member Workshop**, which will be offered not later than sixty (60) days from their appointment date. This invitation will include a congratulatory message on becoming a board/youth council member and discuss the importance of the workshop. An overview of the Workshop will be attached to the email invitation. Ideally, scheduling of workshops will be coupled with either a full board meeting or Executive Committee meeting whenever possible. For each scheduled New Member Workshop, staff will also invite current Board and non-Board Youth Council members to attend.

At the New Member Workshop, each new board member will receive a binder with basic information about board committees, plans, budgets, meeting schedules, bylaws and other relevant WDB information that will help new members to get started. At each New Member Workshop ample time will be allowed for participant questions and a “plus/delta” group evaluation.

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### 2) **Jump Start Action Plan**

At the New Member Workshop, board members will receive a “**Jump Start**” **Action Plan (template attached)** with steps to facilitate understanding of the board’s work and get new board members engaged as soon as possible. Action Steps include required and strong suggested actions that new board members can take in the first 100 days on board:

#### **Required Actions:**

- Completion of Brown Act training
- Completion of Ethics training

#### **Suggested Actions:**

- Meeting with a board member
- Visiting more than one committee
- Visiting a One-Stop Career Center

**Board staff will be assigned to follow up with new board members to make sure they successfully complete the activities in their Action Plans in a timely and efficient manner.**

[Note: New incoming Youth Council appointees who are not also Board members will not be asked to attend committee meetings other than the Youth Council meetings.]

**3) New Board Member Mentoring:** This is a recommended step listed on the new board member’s Jump Start Action Plan. In situations where the new board member was referred by another board member, the mentoring can be encouraged between these two parties. Otherwise, staff will introduce the new member to a more seasoned board member via in person introduction or email. Potential mentors will certainly include experienced Executive Committee members, but will not be limited to them.

The more experienced board member will arrange an informal meeting with the new member and share their experience and observations of being on the board and help to get answers for questions that the new board member may have. Some board members will find this is a very rewarding experience and may choose to extend themselves as mentors on an ongoing basis. Mentoring is strictly on a volunteer basis, although hopefully every board member will be willing to try it at least once.

**4) Committee Assignment:** Every new board member is assigned to a committee of the board within the first ninety (90) days. Staff and board leaders will work with new board members to determine assignments that match their interest with the needs of the committees.

**Committee co-chairs and staff** will personally connect with new board members to welcome them to the committee and provide an update on the committee’s work, current priorities and goals.

## **PART THREE: ONGOING BOARD ENGAGEMENT**

In order to keep board members fully engaged in the work of the board, staff will work along with board officers to ensure the following:

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**Calendars:** Ensure calendars are updated as needed and that current calendars are available on the website as well as e-mailed when unavoidable changes are made. This will allow pre-planning for busy members and better ensure attendance.

**Packets:** Continue to produce high quality packets that have substantial documentation to support members in debating issues and taking actions. Agendas should be varied and designed to include topical presentations that will engage members in meaningful dialogue with each other, sharing and showcasing the perspectives they bring.

**Attendance:** When members miss two consecutive meetings whether they call in or not, a staff person, either Board secretary or Committee staff/support staff, will contact the member to ensure they have not missed key information coming before their committee, and to ensure their ongoing engagement.

**Feedback:** Surveys and evaluations have not proven a timely or effective resource for board feedback. Instead, every committee meeting will allow a 5-minute timeframe for the co-chairs to conduct a quick “**Plus/Delta**” prior to adjournment. This process is inclusive, immediate, and provides a transition to post-meeting discussion and networking among committee members.

**Website use:** Staff and leadership of the board can communicate updates and related news and event items quickly via the web. In this way, members become more knowledgeable and engaged in the work of the Board and the context in which this work occurs, at the county, regional, state, or national level.

**Board Workshops:** This is a good way to bring rich and diverse information forward to the Board. Topics of value and interest may include:

- Economic issues and trends at the local, regional, state and national levels
- Workforce trends that may affect employee hiring and retention in the near term
- Best practices in workforce development programs and policies
- Budgeting and fiduciary responsibilities of board members
- Qualities and experiences of high-performing boards

Workshops can be hosted by individual committees or for the full board. In any case, invitations can be extended to all members including non-board Youth Council members.

**Strategic Planning Retreat:** This annual process is an excellent forum for rejuvenation of members, underscoring key themes, and seeding new initiatives through the introduction of best practices and concepts in the workforce arena. The structure for the retreat should include ample time for networking and idea-sharing among the diverse perspectives of members. Ownership among Board officers and committee co-chairs in planning and anticipating outcomes will yield a high quality result and strong champions of the Plan. Bi-annual review of the work plan will reside with the Executive Committee. All Board members and Youth Council members are encouraged to attend.

**Service learning:** A successful working board is a board of members who are eager to participate. Occasionally, in the past, a member has volunteered to be part of a Service Learning initiative as a speaker, trainer, or mentor at the program level within a One-Stop Center. Their service contribution helps to further enhance the workforce system and provides a greater return on their personal investment.

Staff will work with the One Stop Administrator and workforce partners to generate a short list of possible opportunities and facilitate board interest and participation.

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## **PART FOUR: LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**

The Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County is a business-led board and therefore consistent and effective leadership is best ensured by providing multiple leadership development opportunities for board members who hold business seats. All of the following activities are designed to prepare future leaders for co-chair committee roles and officer seats of the Board. [Note: Youth Council members who are not also board members will not be directly impacted by the following activities.]

### **Rotation among Committees**

Preparation for taking on a leadership role depends on ability and confidence. Given that members have proven ability to lead based on their roles in the business world, it is incumbent on the Staff and outgoing board leadership to instill confidence in future board leaders. Leader confidence is built by developing a solid knowledge base regarding all aspects of the work of the Board.

Future leaders should be encouraged to attend more than one committee if time permits and/or rotate their committee membership during their tenure as a board member prior to holding office. They may be asked to serve from 1-2 years on a given committee and then shift to another committee. In this way, those prospective future leaders will obtain a broader understanding of the full range of the Board's work. Staff strongly recommends that those interested in becoming an officer of the Board consider serving on the P3 committee for some period of time prior to serving in a leadership capacity as this Committee provides mandated functions specific to program outcomes and accountability under the Workforce Investment Act. It also provides an excellent foundation for understanding the core work for which the Board has oversight.

### **Committee Chair Roles**

An excellent way to prepare for leadership is by serving as a co-chair of an ad hoc committee and a standing board committee. The co-chair position offers a broader understanding of the workings of the Board because co-chairs comprise the leadership team of the Board; i.e., the Executive Committee. Deliberations of the Executive Committee include: overall focus and goals of the Board and its committees, in-depth understanding of the context in which the Board and its programs operate, an appreciation and knowledge of the interdependence of the Board's various standing committees, and a commitment to support ongoing and expanded work of the Board.

Each standing committee is led by co-chairs to ensure strong leadership at this level and to ensure continuity over time. Co-chairs work closely with board staff to help set direction for the committee and accomplish committee goals. Members engaged at this level are signaling their high level of engagement and interest in making a more significant investment over time.

### **Attendance at Conferences/Conventions**

Attendance at state and national conferences is a key opportunity for building the knowledge base and expertise of board leadership, especially when accompanied by knowledgeable staff. Attendees learn from talking with peers from other localities and quickly see the larger context in which local work is done. New ideas, specifically those that impact business, such as return on investment and responsiveness to industry needs, are quickly assimilated by business members and inspire further conversations and personal/professional investment in the work. California Workforce Association (CWA) currently holds three conferences per year within California and the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) hosts an annual forum in Washington, DC. In addition, there are state level hearings, California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) meetings, skills council

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meetings, neighboring Workforce Investment Board (WIB) meetings, and One-Stop Operator Consortium meetings that provide venues for further board development.

### **Tools**

Many publications, power point presentations, and other resources are available through national and state organizations that support skills sectors; workforce development, youth employment, economic development, and a variety of related other topics. Many of these organizations are listed as Partnerships or Resources on the Board's website at [www.wdbccc.org](http://www.wdbccc.org).

### **Mentoring Vice Chairs**

To support solid succession planning, the Board strives to seat two Vice Chairs each year. In this way, two individuals are groomed to potentially become Chair. To strengthen the outcome of this design, the Past Chair will serve as a mentor for the incoming Vice-Chair. In this way, the intentional sharing of knowledge will move from one leadership team to the next, ensuring a higher level of continuity. The Executive Committee will support this mentoring process, and will monitor it to ensure that valuable experience-sharing is formalized. Periodically, they may request a report-out from the Vice Chairs and Past-Chair.

### **Informal Board Mentoring and Support**

One of the roles of Executive Committee members is to develop and support future leaders of the Board. Executive Committee members are expected to reach out to newer business members, particularly those who show a desire to engage at a higher level on the board. This outreach can take many forms, including lunch, coffee, phone calls, networking events, conferences, etc.

It is also the responsibility of board leaders to mentor those who may show waning interest possibly through spotty attendance by helping to connect them more closely to the work of the board and helping to address barriers to their success. Board success depends on having good working relationships on a peer to peer basis. Staff can help to facilitate those peer relationships and may attend relationship building meetings as well. [**Note:** *Only two appointed members may meet together in order to comply with Brown Act rules that govern public meetings*).

### **Staff Support of Board Sustainability**

Staff is committed to facilitating relationship building and engagement of board members and to support the ongoing work of Board Development. Staff will handle logistics for workshops and help to plan agendas, secure speakers, provide best practices, and ensure timely communication and accurate information to support the Sustainability Plan. Staff will attend meetings as invited and will bring issues in implementation of the Board Sustainability Plan to the attention of the Executive Committee.

## **PART FIVE: PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING**

The successful implementation of the Board Sustainability Plan requires monitoring by the Executive committee on an annual basis to ensure ongoing relevance. The Executive Committee will review current Board Vitality dashboard metrics and set annual and quarterly targets once a year. These indicators may include: meeting attendance, board vacancy, quorum and scheduling issues, public outreach, and promotion. They will determine if the key indicators continue to be relevant areas for measurement, and if the assigned weights reflect what is most important in evaluating the overall health of the Board.

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In addition, the Executive Committee as well as the other standing committees will review the “Plus/Delta” evaluations periodically. The Executive Committee will also review the “Plus/Delta” evaluations for the full Board.

Other Board Feedback Mechanisms such as phone survey, written survey, exit interviews, and one on one discussion will also be explored to ensure ongoing feedback and evaluation.

Board Development will be a regular agenda item on staff meeting agendas to sustain focus and momentum on board engagement initiatives.

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## Board Attributes & Composition (as of November 2011)

**Total Board seats filled = 35**

**Total Business seats filled = 17 (4 vacancies)**

Characteristics	Current Status (August 2011)	Ideal Targets
<p><b>Good Board Diversity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ethnicity</li>   <li>• Gender</li> </ul>	<p>85% Caucasian 6% Hispanic 6% African American 3% Asian American</p> <p>53% men 47% women</p>	
<p><b>Geographic Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Central County</li> <li>• East County</li> <li>• West County</li> <li>• Countywide</li> </ul>	<p>43% Central County 6% East County 9% West County 42% Countywide</p>	
<p><b>Industry Representation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key targeted sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manufacturing</li> <li>○ Health Care</li> <li>○ Biotech</li> <li>○ Green/Clean Technology</li> <li>○ Construction</li> </ul> </li>   <li>• Large and small business</li> </ul>	<p>Health care, professional services, utility-water, staffing, financial, petrochemical-manufacturing</p> <p>Mid – large business = 47% Small business = 6% Self-employed = 47%</p>	
<p><b>Professional/Functional Expertise:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing communications</li> <li>• Social media</li> <li>• Strategic planning</li> <li>• General management</li> <li>• Finance/accounting</li> <li>• Legal</li> <li>• Human resources</li> <li>• Workforce development</li> <li>• Economic development</li> <li>• Board leadership</li> <li>• Previous board experience</li> <li>• Technology</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance/accounting</li> <li>• Human Resources</li> <li>• Business consulting</li> <li>• Public Relations</li> <li>• General management</li> <li>• Workforce Development</li> <li>• Economic Development</li> <li>• Other board experience</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Professional Characteristics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational skills</li> <li>• Leadership expertise</li> <li>• Good communication</li> <li>• Global thinker; strategic</li> <li>• Problem solver</li> <li>• Community/networking connections</li> <li>• Interest in workforce development</li> </ul>		

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## Youth Council Seat Categories

- Juvenile Justice\*
- Law Enforcement\*
- Public Housing\*
- Community-based Organizations serving youth (may also be Board member)\*\*
- Youth Service Providers ( may also be board members)\*\*
- Parent of a participant\*
- Former youth participant\*
- Local Schools (2)
- Vocational Rehabilitation\*\*
- Labor and Trade Unions (2)
- Workforce Development Board members not part of above categories(5)

\* Indicates seats that are represented on the WDB

\*\* Indicates vacancies as of March 2011

( ) Indicates number presented seated and who are WDB members

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**My Jump Start Action Plan**

To accelerate my learning curve on the Workforce Development Board, and to maximize my service and satisfaction as a board member, I will commit to do take the following actions:

	<b>Suggested Actions</b>	<b>By When</b>
<b>Short term-</b> Next two – four weeks	Complete the Ethics/Brown Act Training Attend at least one committee meeting Read through Orientation Reference Binder Visit WDB website Attend next upcoming full board meeting	
<b>Medium Term-</b> Next two months	Invite a fellow board member for a get-acquainted coffee Visit at least one Career Center Meet with Committee Co-chair to learn more about your assigned committee's goals and accomplishments to date	
<b>Large Term-</b> Next four- six months	Attend a WDB conference if possible Meet with the Past Chair to learn how you can prepare yourself for a leadership role	

**Other steps I will take to support my learning and development as a board member:**