



Louisiana Workforce Investment Council

Strategic Plan 2012

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Table of Contents

	Page
Vision.....	3
Purpose/Mission.....	3
Goals	3
Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies	5
Strategic Goal # 1	5
Increase the Labor Force Participation Rate	
Strategic Goal # 2	6
Implement a Comprehensive Accountability System for Workforce Development Results	
Strategic Goal # 3	7
Develop a Comprehensive System that Credibly Forecasts and Effectively Communicates Workforce Demand and Identifies Priority Workforce Education and Training Needs	
Strategic Goal # 4	8
Increase the High School Graduation Rate	
Strategic Goal # 5	9
Increase the Educational Attainment of the State’s Adult Population to the Southern Regional Education Board States’ Average by 2025	
Strategic Goal # 6	11
Align Postsecondary Resources with Workforce Needs	

Vision

The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council serves to develop a strategic plan to coordinate and integrate a workforce development delivery system to assure efficiency and cooperation between public and private entities by advising the governor on the needs of Louisiana's employers and its workforce as well as being responsible for occupational forecasting used to drive programs and funding for job training.

Purpose/Mission

The central purpose or mission of the Council is to:

- Meet the requirements of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in order to receive funds relevant to workforce activities authorized by the law.
- Advise the governor on the needs of the state's employers and the state's workforce along with strategies for its continued improvement.
- Create a common vision, a strategic state plan and outcomes that will coordinate and integrate a workforce development delivery system to assure the greatest cooperation possible between public and private entities.
- Direct the Occupational Forecasting Conference in determining such official information that is necessary for planning and budgeting with respect to workforce development.

Goals

According to Act 743 of the 2008 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session, the primary goals of the council are to:

- Promote the development of a well-educated, highly skilled workforce in Louisiana through literacy, adult basic education, community education, apprenticeship, and state-of-the-art occupational skills education and training and professional degree programs.
- Advocate for the development of an integrated workforce development delivery system that provides competitive quality services addressing the needs of businesses and workers in Louisiana.
- Develop strategies that will upgrade the skills of Louisiana's existing workforce and prepare new workers with the skills for a constantly changing economy.
- Ensure the equitable distribution of quality education, training, and employment services statewide, especially to distressed and rural areas and areas serving the economically disadvantaged citizens of this state.

Strategic Plan Goals, Objectives and Implementation Strategies

Represented below are six strategic goals with accompanying benchmark objectives and implementation strategies developed by the Council that elaborate on the details for achieving the central purpose and primary goals.

Strategic Goal #1:

Increase the Labor Force Participation Rate

The labor force participation rate represents the proportion of the civilian noninstitutional population that is in the labor force. This measure of labor force activity grew from about 60 percent nationally in 1970 to about 67 percent in 2000, with much of the increase resulting from increased participation by women. In 2011, the participation rates ranged across States from 71.9 percent in North Dakota to 53.8 percent in West Virginia. In the United States, the labor force participation rate is around 63.8 percent. Louisiana's labor force participation rate is around 59 percent.

The civilian noninstitutional population consists of persons 16 years of age and older residing in the 50 States and the District of Columbia who are not inmates of institutions (for example, penal and mental facilities and homes for the aged) and who are not on active duty in the Armed Forces. California is the most populous State, with just under 29 million persons in this category in 2011; Wyoming is the least populous State, with about 438,000 persons.

Benchmark Objectives:

- Increase labor force participation rate to the national average by 2015
- Increase the number of people working and highly skilled potential workers in Louisiana
- Embrace the concept of diversity to ensure Louisiana's labor force is a reflection of the diversity found in Louisiana's population
- Ensure the equitable distribution of quality education, training and employment, especially to distressed and rural areas and areas serving the economically disadvantaged citizens in the state

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Realign unemployment insurance and workers' compensation [workforce development] programs as reemployment services
- Support training for job seekers that prepares them for jobs that provide financial independence
- Work with business and industry to increase the opportunities for nontraditional sources of labor, including veterans, ex-offenders, people with disabilities and people with language barriers, to achieve sustained employment
- Hold Workforce Investment Boards accountable for meeting employers' workforce needs in addition to meeting federal WIA compliance standards

Strategic Goal #2:

Implement a Comprehensive Accountability System for Workforce Development Results

The duties and functions of the Louisiana Workforce Investment Council include, among other things, these two responsibilities: 1) implementing a statewide system for evaluating the effectiveness of all workforce development programs in achieving state and local goals and objectives, and 2) regularly updating recommended strategy for the provision of a coordinated comprehensive workforce development delivery system using a multi-agency approach to ensure that state workforce efforts are responsive to business needs.

Additionally, the WIC is charged with the responsibility of providing an annual report to the Governor describing progress toward the goals of the state strategic plan (this document).

Meeting all of these responsibilities requires the design and implementation of a comprehensive accountability system that includes metrics, data collection and analysis, reporting requirements and activities, responsibility assignments and a calendar.

Benchmark Objective:

Maintain an accountability system consistent with the goals of the Strategic Plan

Recommended Implementation Strategy:

Retain an active project team to develop and maintain the accountability system

Strategic Goal #3:

Develop a Comprehensive System that Credibly Forecasts and Effectively Communicates Workforce Demand and Identifies Priority Workforce Education and Training Needs

An integrated and effective workforce delivery system, driven by the alignment of job training and education with high demand occupations, is essential for maintaining current and future economic stability in Louisiana. This requires an accurate and relevant occupational forecast which is developed using a model that includes significant input by the state's employers. The Louisiana Workforce Investment Council (WIC), in cooperation with the Occupational Forecasting Conference Committee, is currently refining methods and processes to improve future forecasts with input by business and industry.

With its strategic membership make up, the WIC is in position to provide a framework for reasonable integration or collaboration of services among workforce delivery partners. It is the goal of the WIC to advocate for this collaboration in order to promote a system which responds to the needs of employers, workers and job seekers in a timely way. This also will create an environment where all potential workers have access to job preparation services regardless of historical barriers to employment, and also creates a venue for informed participation by Louisiana's employers.

Benchmarks Objectives:

- Maintain comprehensive and accurate industry and occupational short- and long-term forecasts that are actionable at the state and regional levels
- Utilize the Occupational Forecast to guide the delivery of the workforce development services through an integrated network of state agencies, educational institutions, local workforce investment boards and community-based organizations

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Coordinate all business engagement activities across state agencies
- Support the implementation of credible, portable credentials and skills assessments throughout the workforce delivery system
- Increase business engagement by developing and leveraging partnerships through the local workforce investment boards
- Implement and maintain a system that clearly identifies high-demand, high-wage jobs
- Develop a credible and actionable forecast for short- and long-term demand
- Include input from the Louisiana Driver Firms, which is a list of 150 firms that have either top 100 direct employment or top 100 economic impact
- Conduct a baseline assessment using historical occupational demand data to establish future short- and long-term occupational forecast

Strategic Goal #4:

Increase the High School Graduation Rate

Today there is universal recognition that career opportunity and family income are highly correlated with education level. High school graduation is widely regarded as the minimum level of achievement necessary to seek financial self-sufficiency, and it is the gateway to all postsecondary education options.

The following numbers from the National Center of Education Statistics (U.S. Department of Education) provides clear evidence. In 2009, the median income for high school dropouts was \$21,000 compared with \$30,000 for high school graduates. Those with associate's degrees earned \$36,000, bachelor's degree holders earned \$45,000, and young adults with a master's degree or higher earned \$60,000.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) reports that Louisiana's 2009 – 10 adjusted high school graduation rate was 67.2 percent. Louisiana's comparable 2010 – 11 graduate rate was 70.1 percent. The national average freshman graduation rate is 74.7 percent as well as the adjusted cohort graduation rate. Graduation rates in top states are above 80 percent and the mid-range states have graduation rates above 74 percent. These numbers are based on the most recent statistics from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES).

In 2009, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that the percent of persons 25 and over in Louisiana who had completed high school was 82.2 percent, leaving 17.8 percent without a high school degree.

The LDOE is implementing a variety of strategies to maximize high school graduation rates. At the same time, the LDOE will be implementing accountability and assessment mechanisms to enhance the quality of K – 12 education. This emphasis on accountability will best ensure that Louisiana high school graduates receive degrees that effectively prepare them for career and/or academic success.

Benchmark Objective:

Increase the Louisiana cohort high school graduation rate to 80 percent by 2014

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Provide a comprehensive set of early childhood development programs (Age 0 to 5)
- Design and implement a complimentary set of programs and services focused on preventing high school dropouts and recovering youth who drop out of high school
- Maintain a strong statewide accountability and assessment system
- Implement Course Choice to recruit traditional and non-traditional course providers to offer a comprehensive selection of rigorous course offerings focused on job preparedness and core academic achievement

Strategic Goal #5:

Increase the Educational Attainment of the State's Adult Population to the Southern Regional Education Board States' Average by 2025

Today's economy, and that of the future, requires higher level skills than in the past. These skills require training beyond traditional high school.

With less than 30 percent of Louisiana's adults holding a postsecondary credential, the existing workforce in Louisiana is ill prepared to work in a knowledge-based economy. If Louisiana does not dramatically accelerate the production of postsecondary credentials, its workforce will not have the requisite skills and Louisiana's competitiveness for 21st century jobs will be compromised.

By increasing the numbers of individuals with postsecondary credentials, the State will position itself to better compete in regional, national and global economies and improve the quality of life of its citizenry.

The Board of Regents has established the goal of increasing the educational attainment of its adult citizens to the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) average of 42 percent by 2025 and designed a performance funding model to support and reward the achievement of that goal. The Board of Regents will report to the Workforce Investment Council on the State's progress towards these goals and continue to enact policies as necessary.

The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems (NCHEMS) estimated that at its current rate of growth Louisiana will reach an educational attainment rate of its adult population of 35.7 percent by 2025. NCHEMS also estimated that the SREB average will reach 42.0 percent by 2025 (with a national rate of 46.6 percent). The Board believes that setting a goal of the SREB average (42.0 percent) rather than the normal growth in its rate (35.7 percent) reflects an appropriate balance of aspiration and realism.

The table below indicates the annual growth in awards by level from 2016 through 2025 necessary for Louisiana's adults to attain the SREB average by 2025.

Projected Awards Necessary for Louisiana to Reach SREB Average by 2025

Degree Level	Projected 2025 Additional Awards Needed to Reach SREB Average	Additional Annual Awards Needed Per Year 2016 – 2025	Percent Estimated Additional Annual Growth Rate 2016 – 2025
Certificates/ Diplomas	31,655	577	9
Associate Degrees	40,212	717	9
Baccalaureate	72,250	1,309	5

To reach the goal of the SREB average by 2025, Louisiana must produce 2,603 additional undergraduate credentials annually from 2016 through 2025, representing an annual growth of 7.23 percent.

In order to determine the number of additional undergraduate credentials needed to reach the SREB average, the deficit of 6.3 percentage points was applied to the projected number of Louisiana citizens in the 25 – 64 year old age group in 2025. It is important to note that the balance of credentials (certificates/diplomas, associate degrees, and baccalaureate degrees) awarded at the undergraduate level in the SREB is bachelor's at 50 percent, associate 28 percent and one-year or greater certificates/diplomas 22 percent.

While Louisiana does not reflect that distribution of awards (bachelor's 65 percent, associate 15 percent, certificates/diplomas 20 percent), through a variety of efforts Louisiana is moving towards the SREB distribution. Part of the reason for the imbalance of degree production in Louisiana is the relative youth of its community college system. **Therefore, allocating goals by award level is appropriate and necessary in aligning with future workforce needs. The Board of Regents expects degree production at all levels to increase, with the greatest rate of growth occurring in diplomas, certificates and associate degrees at the two-year colleges.**

The goal of reaching the SREB average by 2025 is challenging, but it can be accomplished if all stakeholders—government, business, industry and the campuses—invest in and commit to its achievement.

In recognition of the critical importance of this goal, institutions will be rewarded in two ways for meeting performance targets:

1. Tuition increases requirements; and
2. Performance funding measures

Benchmark Objectives:

- Through collaboration with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE), graduate more students from high school ready for college or career
- Increase the college-going rate of high school graduates
- Increase the number of adults age 25 and older enrolled in postsecondary education programs
- Improve postsecondary persistence/retention rates (1st to 2nd Year and 1st to 3rd Year)
- Increase graduation of transfer students
- Increase the rate and number of students earning a postsecondary credential

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Provide and strengthen Louisiana's comprehensive delivery system of continuing adult education and literacy and numeracy programs
- Balance undergraduate enrollment between two-year community and technical colleges and four-year universities in the 50-50 range
- Expand recruitment efforts at the state's community and technical colleges by increasing marketing, promotion and awareness of available associate and technical programs
- Offer job seekers individual employment services—through guidance counselors, college career offices, WIBs or other means—that link their interests and skills to demand jobs and which show the value of increasing their skills and education on their career and earning potential

Strategic Goal #6:

Align Postsecondary Resources with Workforce Needs

For decades, Louisiana has been an undereducated state at all levels. In 2010, Georgetown University looked at labor reports and projected for each state what its workforce will look like in the year 2018. Overall, 60 percent of all jobs in the United States will require some form of postsecondary credential.

The Georgetown report projects that 51 percent of jobs in Louisiana will require postsecondary credentials. The report indicated that unless there are systemic changes to the state's workforce development delivery system, in 2018 Louisiana will:

- Rank 6th in the nation in the percentage of jobs for high school dropouts;
- Rank 5th in the nation in the percentage of jobs for high school graduates;
- Rank 50th in the nation for jobs requiring an associate degree;
- Rank 45th in the nation in the percentage of jobs for college graduates;
- Rank 47th in the nation in the percentage of jobs for people with graduate degrees; and
- Rank next to last in the percent of jobs requiring postsecondary education.

When you combine those data together, Louisiana will rank only ahead of West Virginia, in the percentage of jobs requiring any postsecondary credentials in 2018.

Thus, building and sustaining a 21st century economy for Louisiana requires continuing workforce development at all levels, from adult basic education to advanced graduate and professional training. Louisiana's postsecondary education programs and policies must address the needs of all citizens through a system that produces graduates who strengthen economic and social vitality, upgrade the overall quality of life, and attract high-quality, high-impact business and industry to the State.

The PK-20 and higher education communities have joined with workforce and economic development organizations to emphasize the importance of acquiring knowledge and skills—both initial credentialing and lifelong learning—needed for economic security and an improved quality of life. At the same time, employers have a significant role to play. Without action to upgrade the skills and knowledge of employees, companies will have trouble remaining competitive and Louisiana will have difficulty attracting new business and industry.¹

By raising expectations for initial employment and by providing access to formal education programs for both basic and advanced skills, employers reinforce the message that lifelong learning matters. To that end, employers across the State, beginning with the State itself, will be urged to require evidence of workplace readiness (a *Career Readiness Certificate*, Industry-based Certification or college credential) as a condition of employment.

Benchmark Objectives:

- Develop a skilled workforce to support an expanding economy
- Entering postsecondary undergraduate enrollment balanced to approximately 50-50 between two-year/technical colleges and four-year universities by 2014

¹ ACT. *Reading Between the Lines – What the ACT Reveals About College Readiness in Reading*, 2006.

Recommended Implementation Strategies:

- Provide and strengthen Louisiana's comprehensive delivery system of continuing adult education and literacy and numeracy programs
- Balance undergraduate enrollment between two-year community and technical colleges and four-year universities in the 50-50 range
- Expand recruitment efforts at the state's community and technical colleges by increasing marketing, promotion and awareness of available associate and technical programs
- Offer job seekers individual employment services—through guidance counselors, college career offices, WIBs or other means—that link their interests and skills to demand jobs and which show the value of increasing their skills and education on their career and earning potential