

**PARTNERS FOR A
COMPETITIVE
WORKFORCE** 

**STRATEGIC PLAN
2012 - 2014**

OUR CHALLENGE: GROWING SKILLS GAP

Our region's long-term economic success depends on our ability to develop and supply a qualified workforce. Businesses increasingly need higher skilled workers to compete and grow out of this recession, and workers need skills and preparation to secure well-paying jobs and advance in their careers. By 2018, nearly two-thirds of all jobs will require some post-secondary education or training. Of these jobs that will require post-secondary education, half will require a Bachelor's degree or higher, and half will require an Associate's degree or occupational certificate.¹ In addition to technical skills and credentials, employers need workers with the professional skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

The skills of our workforce are not keeping pace with the demands of employers. Nearly half of our current workforce lacks any education beyond high school, and far too many of our high school graduates fail to successfully enroll in and complete post-secondary education.² Employers also report that far too many workers lack basic professionalism skills, like work ethic, dependability, taking initiative, and problem solving.³ Our businesses cannot compete if they cannot find qualified workers, and our residents cannot get family-sustaining jobs unless they further develop their skills.

This growing skills gap threatens our economic competitiveness. Site Selection Magazine's 2010 survey of corporate real-estate executives revealed that "Workforce Skills" are the number one consideration when making site selection decisions.⁴ However, half of all local businesses expect to struggle to find qualified workers for in-demand jobs in the next 3-5 years, even amidst record unemployment.⁵ A recent McKinsey & Co. survey found that 40% of corporate executives report that they have had unfilled positions for six months or longer because they cannot find qualified applicants.⁶ Nationwide, the U.S. Chamber estimates that at least 3 million jobs go unfilled due to the skills gap; a figure expected to reach 7 million by 2018. Economists estimate that if we had skilled workers to match job openings, our unemployment rate would be 2 - 3 percentage points lower.⁷ Bottom line – our businesses cannot compete if they cannot find qualified workers, and our residents cannot get family-sustaining jobs unless they further develop their skills.

¹ Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018," June 2010.

² U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2009 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates.

³ Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, "Workforce Trends in Greater Cincinnati: Key Findings of the 2010 Employer Survey," June 2010.

⁴ Site Selection Magazine, November 2010.

⁵ Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network, "Workforce Trends in Greater Cincinnati: Key Findings of the 2010 Employer Survey," June 2010.

⁶ McKinsey & Company, "The Growing U.S. Jobs Challenge," June 2011.

⁷ Institute for a Competitive Workforce, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, "Connecting Workforce Development to Economic Development," presentation delivered March 3, 2011.

OUR RESPONSE: REGIONAL COLLABORATION TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP

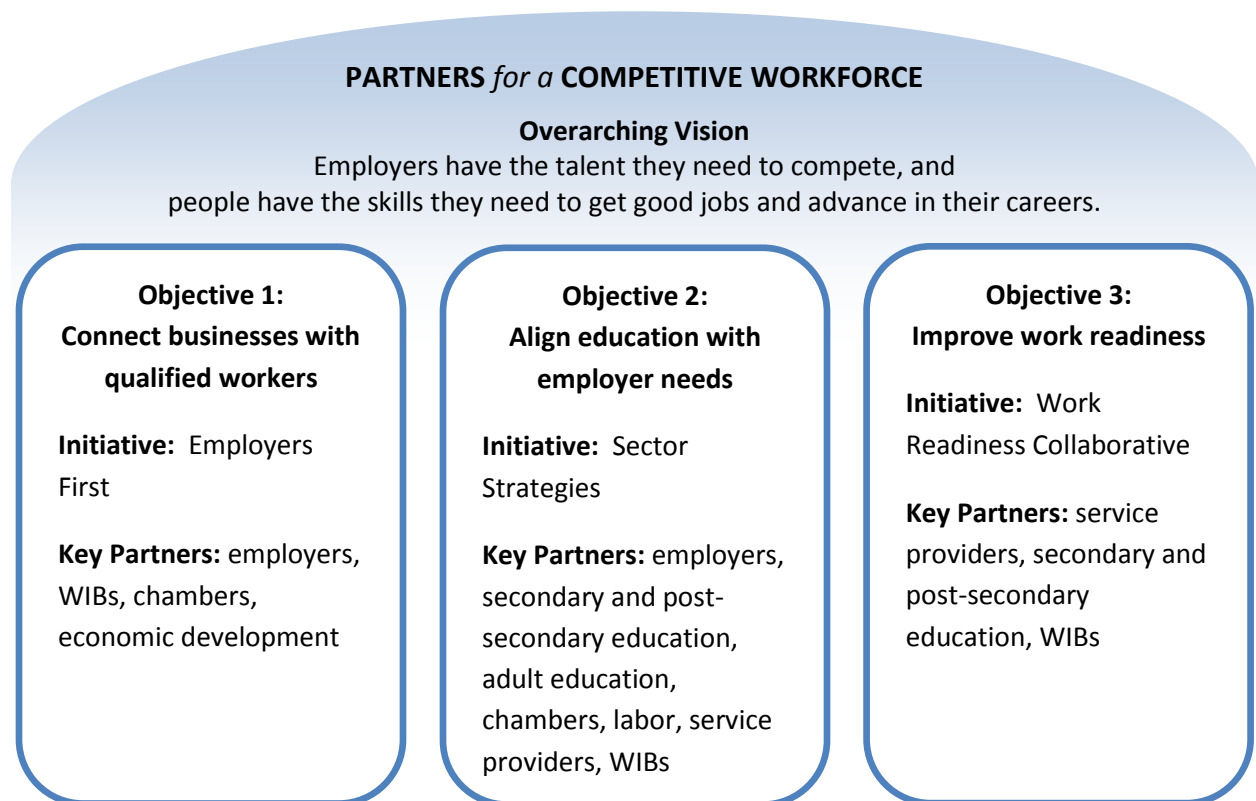
Our community has a long history of collaboration to address our workforce challenges. For over ten years, businesses, workforce investment boards, economic development agencies, educational institutions, philanthropic funders, and community organizations across the tri-state have come together to coordinate service delivery, address skill shortages in specific industries, and serve employers. Two notable efforts have been organized to accelerate the pace of collaboration so that our community goes farther, faster in tackling our workforce challenges—the Employers First Regional Workforce Network and the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network.

Since 2001, the four workforce investment boards that serve the tri-state along with the Northern Kentucky Chamber have worked together to serve employers with coordinated services around major layoff or hiring events in the region. Collectively, the four boards (Indiana Region 9 Workforce Board, Northern Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board, and Workforce One Investment Board of Southwest Ohio) administer roughly \$13.5M in federal funds across our tri-state region and serve nearly 50,000 individuals and 1,200 businesses. The four workforce boards formalized their collaboration by launching the Employers First Regional Workforce Network in mid-2011 to coordinate efforts to meet employer needs. Employers First will focus on connecting businesses with workforce supply, streamlined business services, outreach and marketing, partnerships with chambers and economic development, and regional strategic partnerships to develop a skilled workforce. As a formal partnership of workforce boards across three states, Employers First is well-positioned to be our employers' "first and best source" for solutions to their workforce challenges.

In 2008, the Greater Cincinnati Workforce Network (GCWN) was convened as a regional public-private partnership aimed at growing the skills of our workforce to match the needs of employers in key industries. Launched by The Greater Cincinnati Foundation and currently led by United Way of Greater Cincinnati, the partnership was created when Cincinnati was selected to be a part of the National Fund for Workforce Solutions. GCWN partners have raised more than \$3.4 million and leveraged an additional \$21.6 million in public and private funds from local, state, and national sources. GCWN has primarily been focused on supporting career pathways in health care, construction, and advanced manufacturing to help employers access skilled workers and help low-skill adults get the skills and preparation needed for in-demand careers. Over 150 organizations from public, private, nonprofit sectors have been engaged in GCWN initiatives. Finally, in three years, more than 4,800 individuals have been trained across three career pathway initiatives with 80%+ completing training and earning over 3,500 industry-recognized credentials and an estimated 60-65% job placement rate.

In early 2011, leaders from the workforce boards and GCWN launched a planning process to figure out how to more closely align our efforts and build on our successes. The result of this planning process was the creation of *Partners for a Competitive Workforce (PCW)* as the umbrella that brings together all of the region’s workforce efforts under a common mission: *meet employer demand by growing the skills of our current and future workforce*. The branding of “Partners for a Competitive Workforce” reflects this focus on supplying a skilled workforce that our employers need to compete and grow, as well as building the skills of workers so they can compete for good jobs. Building on the history of Employers First and GCWN, PCW will be positioned as a tri-state regional partnership between businesses, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, service providers and philanthropic funders. PCW will provide a common platform to communicate our region’s workforce priorities and progress, align and coordinate those efforts towards common goals, and continuously improve strategies.

PCW will serve in a strategic coordinating role to set common goals, review data, coordinate efforts, address gaps, advance policy, and align resources. PCW will focus on supporting three key initiatives: 1) connecting businesses with workforce supply through Employers First, 2) developing sector strategies that align education with industry needs, and 3) improving work readiness. Together, PCW will ensure that we are developing the full talent supply chain for employers to help our region attain the bold goal of 90 percent of our labor force gainfully employed by 2020 [see Appendix A: “Talent Supply Chain”].



VISION

Employers have the talent they need to compete, and people have the skills they need to get good jobs and advance in their careers.

MISSION

Meet employer demand by growing the skills of our current and future workforce.

OBJECTIVES, STRATEGIES & MEASURES

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 1: CONNECT BUSINESSES WITH QUALIFIED WORKERS

Strategy 1: Support the **Employers First Regional Workforce Network** in creating a **streamlined business services approach** to deliver workforce solutions in response to employer needs. This process will consist of: 1) a single contact point for employers, 2) an in-depth assessment of the employer's need by a business services representative, 3) navigating workforce and education resources available to address the need and developing a proposal package tailored to meet the employer's need, and 4) continued follow up to navigate and manage the services selected by the employer.

Strategy 2: Support Employers First in launching a **communications and outreach campaign** to raise employer awareness of the "menu" of workforce services.

Strategy 3: Support Employers First in developing a strong **partnership with economic development agencies, chambers of commerce, industry associations, and other business organizations** to coordinate workforce services with business retention and recruitment efforts.

Measures: *total # employers served; total # jobseekers served; total # incumbent workers served; # needs assessments conducted; # employers moving forward with proposed services; # employers receiving specific services (i.e. screening, assessment, OJT, incumbent training, etc.); employer satisfaction ratings; # website hits; response time to initial inquiry; # days to fill/meet employer request*

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 2: ALIGN EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYER NEEDS THROUGH SECTOR STRATEGIES

Strategy 1: Develop and/or support **industry partnerships in 5-6 priority industries** (including our current focus on healthcare, construction, advanced manufacturing)

among employers, school districts, colleges and universities, adult education providers, and community organizations to close skill gaps and develop the full talent supply chain for the industry. These partnerships will work closely with employers to identify the current and future workforce needs of the industry, and improve and coordinate education and training programs to respond to those needs. Priority industries will be identified in partnership with Employers First and economic development entities.

Strategy 2: Build career pathways for 5-6 priority industries to prepare the **current and future** workforce for in-demand careers. Align secondary, post-secondary, and community-based education and training along career pathways to help youth and adults get education or training beyond high school and earn a post-secondary credential aligned to industry needs. Specific pathway components include career awareness and counseling beginning in middle school, work experiences such as internships and co-ops, career-oriented curriculum and contextualized learning, articulation and dual enrollment, and incorporation of industry-recognized credentials. The talent pipeline work will be coordinated with existing partnerships of K-12 and post-secondary educational institutions.

***Measures:** # industry partnerships; # employer partners; # education/training partners; # students reached; #/% individuals enrolling in and completing training or post-secondary program; # credentials earned; #/% individuals hired/retained/advanced through the career pathways; ROI for employers*

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE AND EXPAND WORK READINESS SERVICES TO HELP INDIVIDUALS OBTAIN AND RETAIN GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

Strategy 1: Convene a **Work Readiness Collaborative** (WRC) of service providers to improve and coordinate work readiness and placement efforts for disadvantaged jobseekers (ex-offenders, chronically unemployed, disconnected youth). The WRC will focus on **aligning around core work readiness competencies and incorporating common, evidence-based training components and certifications** to ensure that regardless of what program an individual has participated in, the completion of the program would provide an assurance of attainment of foundational employability skills. The WRC will serve as an umbrella collaborative focused on coordinating and aligning the work of sub-groups focused on specific populations.

***Measures:** # participating providers; # individuals served; #/% individuals completing work readiness program; #/% individuals certified work ready (NCRC); #/% individuals placed and retained in employment; employer satisfaction and ROI*

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 1: COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA ON CURRENT NEEDS AND FUTURE WORKFORCE TRENDS

Strategy 1: Create a **Regional Workforce Dashboard** to analyze and report key outcomes across multiple workforce service providers to understand regional performance and identify gaps in service delivery.

Strategy 2: Collect, analyze, and disseminate **labor market data** on workforce trends, gaps, and needs in the region.

Measures: # agencies on G*STARS; media placements; reports issued

Dashboard measures: Demographic Data (race/ethnicity, income, age, gender, zip code, barriers, etc.), Service Utilization Data (# served, # receiving work readiness services, # assessments given, # receiving occupational skill training, # receiving job search/placement assistance, credential attainment, etc.), and Outcomes Data (job placement, hourly earnings, 6-month retention, etc.)

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AROUND WORKFORCE EFFORTS

Strategy 1: Develop a **comprehensive communications plan** that identifies key messages, target audiences, multiple communications channels, and activities to build community will. Messaging and communications will emphasize employer needs, industry trends, skill shortages, and resources available for employers, jobseekers and students.

Strategy 2: Create a **web portal** that aggregates regional labor market information from multiple sources on occupation and industry trends and skill requirements, and matches labor market data with education and training programs available in the region. The web portal will be an information clearinghouse for employers, jobseekers, students, career-changers, education and training providers, economic developers, and workforce professionals.

Measures: media placements; # web portal hits; user satisfaction

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 3: ALIGN FUNDING AND POLICY TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE TALENT SUPPLY CHAIN

Strategy 1: Develop work plan for **raising and aligning public and private funds** to address critical gaps in workforce services, pilot innovations, and scale-up evidence-based programs. Coordinate regional proposals for major foundation and state and federal government grants. Secure sustainable multi-year funding support for core operations of PCW priorities.

Strategy 2: Develop work plan for coordinating workforce policy efforts to **advance institutional and public policy changes** to address gaps in services, reduce barriers, and support system alignment.

***Measures:** total \$ raised and aligned; # local funders participating; # outside grants secured; achievement of policy changes; total employer investments*

PARTNERS FOR A COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE STRATEGY DIAGRAM

VISION
Employers have the talent they need to compete, and people have the skills they need to get good jobs and advance in their careers.

MISSION
Meet employer demand by growing the skills of our current and future workforce.

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 1
Connect businesses with qualified workers

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 2
Align education with employer needs

PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 3
Improve work readiness

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 1
Collect and analyze data on workforce trends

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 2
Create and implement a comprehensive communications plan

SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 3
Align funding and policy to support improvements

STRATEGIES
1. Streamlined business services
2. Communications and outreach
3. Partnership with economic dev.

STRATEGIES
1. Develop industry partnerships
2. Build career pathways for current and future workforce

STRATEGIES
1. Work Readiness Collaborative focused on core competencies and common training components

STRATEGIES
1. Regional Workforce Dashboard
2. Labor market data analysis

STRATEGIES
1. Comprehensive communications plan
2. Web portal

STRATEGIES
1. Raise and align funds
2. Policy advocacy

MEASURES
employers served; # jobseekers served; #incumbents served; # needs assessments conducted; # employers moving forward with proposed services; # employers receiving specific services; employer satisfaction ratings; # website hits; response time to initial inquiry; # days to fill/meet employer request

MEASURES
industry partnerships; # employer partners; # education/training partners; # students reached; #/% enrolling in and completing training program; # credentials earned; #/% hired/retained/advanced through the career pathways; ROI for employers

MEASURES
participating providers; # individuals served; #/% completing work readiness program; #/% certified work ready (NCRC); #/% placed and retained; employer satisfaction and ROI

MEASURES
agencies on G*STARS; media placements; reports issued

MEASURES
web portal hits; user satisfaction; media placements

MEASURES
total \$ raised and aligned; # local funders participating; # outside grants secured; achievement of policy changes; total employer investments

STRUCTURE

Partners for a Competitive Workforce is a public-private partnership in the Ohio, Kentucky, Indiana region among businesses, workforce investment boards, chambers of commerce, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, service providers and philanthropic funders. PCW is an umbrella that brings together all of the region's workforce efforts under a common mission, and works to align and coordinate those efforts towards common goals. PCW provides a common platform to communicate our region's workforce priorities and progress and continuously improve strategies.

All of the individual initiatives that come together through PCW are independent initiatives with separate governance and staff. Each initiative assumes leadership over distinct priorities in the region's workforce system, and is responsible for its own oversight and direction. All initiatives are aligned and mutually reinforcing in their activities; the overall success of the region's workforce development efforts requires the success of all of the initiatives.

Governance

- **PCW Council**

- **Role:** provide a strategic coordinating mechanism to set common goals, review data, coordinate efforts, address gaps, advance policy, and align resources. Specific responsibilities of the Council include: reviewing progress; providing strategic direction; brokering relationships; aligning resources and strategies; and serving as ambassadors for PCW to external audiences.
- **Composition:** The Council will consist of leadership from the following stakeholder groups: employers from priority sectors, chambers of commerce, WIBs, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions, service providers, labor, and community volunteers. Some positions on the Council will rotate every 2 years to ensure broad stakeholder participation, while others may serve ex-officio.
- **Meetings:** The Council will meet quarterly to review progress and focus on specific strategic issues. More frequent meetings may be necessary in the initial transition phase.

- **Fiscal agent**

- United Way of Greater Cincinnati serves as the fiscal agent for PCW. The Executive Director is an employee of United Way, and is responsible for all operations.

PARTNERS *for a* COMPETITIVE WORKFORCE

Overarching Vision

Employers have the talent they need to compete, and people have the skills they need to get good jobs and advance in their careers.

Overarching Mission

Meet employer demand by growing the skills of our current and future workforce.

Bold Goal

By 2020, 90 percent of the labor force will be gainfully employed.

Objective 1:

Connect businesses with qualified workers

Initiative: Employers First

Partners: employers, WIBs, chambers, economic development

Strategies:

- Coordinated business services and outreach
- Partnership with economic development

Objective 2:

Align education with employer needs

Initiative: Sector Strategies

Partners: employers, secondary and post-secondary education, adult education, chambers, labor, service providers, WIBs

Strategies:

- Develop industry partnerships
- Build career pathways for current and future workforce

Objective 3:

Improve work readiness

Initiative: Work Readiness Collaborative

Partners: service providers, secondary and post-secondary education, WIBs

Strategies:

- Align around core work readiness competencies
- Incorporate common training components and assessments

PCW Council

A strategic coordinating body comprised of representatives from the following stakeholder groups: employers from priority sectors, chambers of commerce, WIBs, educational institutions, service providers, labor, and community volunteers.

Joint Strategies

- messaging and communications
- common data collection and review
- coordinating efforts and addressing gaps
- policy advocacy
- raising and aligning funds
- data mining and research analysis

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (2012 – 2014)

ACTION STEPS & DELIVERABLES		2012				2013				2014				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 1: CONNECT BUSINESSES WITH QUALIFIED WORKERS														
Strategy 1: Create streamlined business services via Employers First	Establish streamlined process and procedures for regional employer services	◆												
	Implement process and fulfill employer requests for service													
	Track/report data related to employer services and results													
Strategy 2: Communications and outreach to employers	Create marketing materials for menu of employer services available	◆												
	Organize and participate in employer events to raise awareness													
	Conduct outreach to targeted companies													
Strategy 3: Partnership with economic dev.	Conduct outreach to business organizations about employer services available													
	Determine strategies to better integrate workforce services with economic dev. efforts													
PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 2: ALIGN EDUCATION WITH EMPLOYER NEEDS THROUGH SECTOR STRATEGIES														
Strategy 1: Develop and/or support industry partnerships in 5-6 priority industries	Support the expansion and sustainability of the Health Careers Collaborative													
	Continue development of sector partnerships in adv. manufacturing and construction													
	Develop sustainability plans for adv. manufacturing and construction partnerships					◆								
	Identify 2-3 new priority sectors through data analysis and employer engagement			◆										
	Determine staffing needs for facilitation of new sector partnerships													
	Implement staffing plan to organize new sector partnerships													
	Recruit employer consortium for priority sectors to determine priorities													
	Determine priorities and work plans for new sector partnerships							◆						
Strategy 2: Build career pathways for priority industries for current and future workforce	Continue development of career pathway initiatives in current priority industries													
	Develop career pathways and/or other training strategies for new sectors													
	Develop “talent pipeline” plan for expanding into high schools and middle schools													
	Assess existing high school and middle school efforts													
	Implement “talent pipeline” plan													

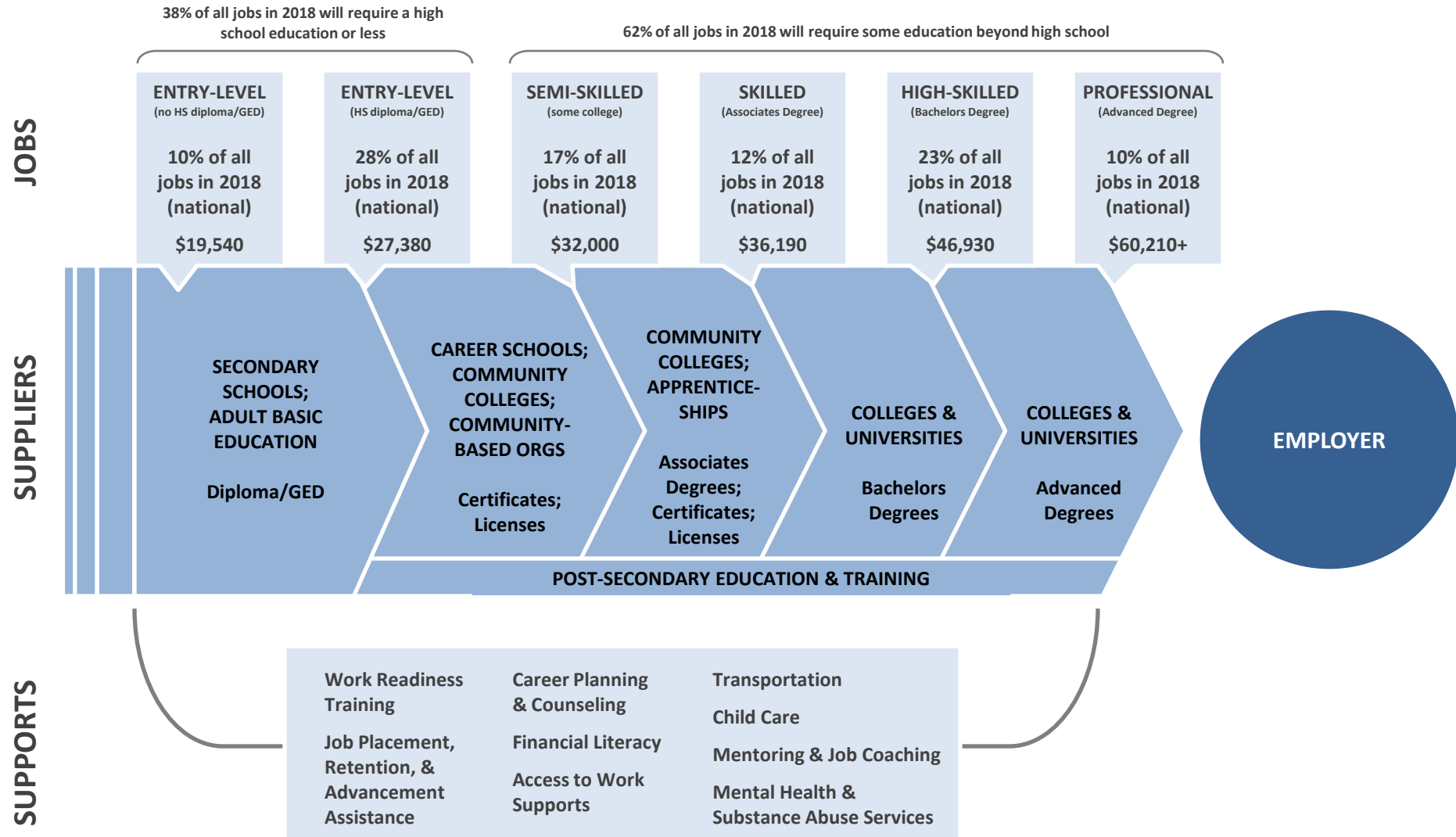
◆ = Key Deliverable

ACTION STEPS & DELIVERABLES		2012				2013				2014				
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	
PRIORITY OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE AND EXPAND WORK READINESS SERVICES														
Strategy 1: Convene a Work Readiness Collaborative to improve and coordinate services	Develop work plan for WRC and secure facilitator													
	Convene partners and finalize work plan													
	Collect/analyze common data to determine priorities; define core competencies													
	Develop/implement plan for improvement; continue data collection/analysis													
	Report on pilot project with progress made, and develop continuation plan													
SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 1: COLLECT AND ANALYZE DATA ON CURRENT NEEDS AND FUTURE WORKFORCE TRENDS														
Strategy 1: Create a Regional Workforce Dashboard	Complete development of the regional G*Stars dashboard													
	Add new partners to data system; provide ongoing technical assistance to ensure quality													
	Conduct data analysis for continuous improvement													
	Develop plan for disseminating dashboard data													
Strategy 2: Collect, analyze, and disseminate labor market data	Conduct and publish regional labor market study													
	Assess feasibility of conducting a comprehensive employer survey													
	Determine need/plan for ongoing labor market analyses or surveys													
SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 2: CREATE AND IMPLEMENT A COMPREHENSIVE COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AROUND WORKFORCE EFFORTS														
Strategy 1: Develop communications plan	Convene workgroup and secure assistance in developing communications plan													
	Develop communications plan with messages, audiences, and channels identified													
	Implement communications plan													
Strategy 2: Create a web portal to aggregate workforce information	Assess customer needs, existing options, and feasibility of portal													
	Develop plan for developing or expanding a portal													
	Implement portal plan													
SUPPORTING OBJECTIVE 3: ALIGN FUNDING AND POLICY TO SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE TALENT SUPPLY CHAIN														
Strategy 1: Raise and align public and private funds	Secure multi-year funding commitments for core operations													
	Leverage pooled and aligned funds to support initiatives													
	Provide coordination and grant writing support for securing external grants													
Strategy 2: Coordinate workforce policy advocacy	Refine/prioritize shared public policy priorities													
	Coordinate regular policy briefings for elected officials and administrators													

 = Key Deliverable

TALENT SUPPLY CHAIN

BOLD GOALS BY 2020: 90% LABOR FORCE GAINFULLY EMPLOYED; 45% ADULTS WITH ASSOCIATES DEGREE OR HIGHER



National job projections: Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce, "Help Wanted: Projections of Jobs and Education Requirements through 2018," June 2010
 National median earnings of adults 25 and over, by highest level of educational attainment: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, March 2010