



Workforce Development Messaging

The following messages are meant to help Workforce Development Board staff and board members talk about why workforce development is important to general audiences, as well as three target audiences: employers, policymakers, and system stakeholders. This is not a verbatim script; it is the basis for your talking points. It is best if you can pull from your own experiences and provide stories and examples that show impact. The storybank below will help get you started.

Core messages

- Workforce Development can be defined as efforts that provide opportunities that prepare people for education and available careers, and connect businesses to skilled workers.
- Workforce Development Boards do this by building relationships and trust, bringing partners together and coordinating resources that meet the needs of the economy of today and the future.
- Workforce Development Boards provide leadership and direction to the community that closes the gap between what employers want and the skills workers have.
- Individuals and communities prosper when residents have access to gainful employment and businesses have access to a skilled workforce; that's at the heart of making the people who live or work in our region thrive.
- *Consider adding in a value proposition statement for your board, such as:* For every dollar spent on workforce development, the community receives a \$17 return in that investment.

Targeted audience messages:

This is the foundation and the basis to develop talking points, which you customize for a specific purpose. The bolded messages are the key points to help each audience understand the workforce development system and the role of the Workforce Development Board. The non-bolded points are further explanation that may help provide additional detail to your audience.

1. Employers

- **Businesses thrive when they have access to the skilled workers they need, now and in the future.**
- **Workforce Development Boards help businesses hire the skilled employees that they need to sustain or grow.**
- **They help businesses directly, as well as the current and future workforce.** (Add one or more of the following points to provide additional detail, which is also found in the Frequently Asked Questions)
 - Workforce Development Boards help businesses focus their search by identifying the types of skills they need, and then helping them obtain workers with those skills.
 - If a new skill is required of employees, Workforce Development Boards can work with the business to connect to the additional training they need.
 - Workforce Development Boards help individuals from all walks of life build their skills and find a career.
 - They also help mold the future workforce by shaping K-12 education, post-secondary education, and technical education and training services, based on specific industry needs.

2. Policymakers

- **When businesses thrive and residents have access to employment, it leads to more private investment and an overall better quality of life across the region.**
- **Workforce Development provides opportunities to connect, train, and educate residents for careers that help businesses and our economy to thrive.**
 - For example (use one data point or story that will resonate with the policymaker).
- **Workforce Development Boards play a critical role to assist businesses and support career seekers.**
(Add one or more of the following points to provide additional detail)
 - Workforce Development Boards build relationships and customize solutions that assist businesses to relocate or expand, avoid layoffs, and (if necessary) transition workers to other employment.
 - Workforce Development Boards support career seekers with career information and guidance, access to training and education, and other services, which can provide individuals with a sustainable income and build financial assets, such as savings, a house, or a car, or pay for their child's college education.

3. System stakeholders

- **Workforce development includes many partners who create solutions that produce current and future workers with skills that align with business needs.**
- **All partners must work together to help the community thrive.**
 - For example (choose one example from the story bank below):
- **Workforce Development Boards play a critical role in bringing partners together.**
 - Workforce Development Boards convene, build, and promote trusting partnerships between industry, economic development, post-secondary education, K-12 and others to develop a workforce with the skills needed to support our economy.
- **Workforce Development Boards connect with business and industry, and inform education providers, so that the workforce is building relevant skills and experience.** (Consider adding additional detail in the sub-bullets)
 - Workforce Development Boards have connections with businesses and industry, which helps them understand the experience and skills desired to meet employer needs.
 - They inform education providers so that these needs can be met through relevant coursework and training.

The following messages may be added to use for specific system stakeholders:

- *For economic development: They know that finding and keeping employees is one of the biggest concerns for businesses.*
 - Workforce Development Boards help businesses identify the skills they need and connect workers to the education and training they need to meet those requirements.
 - Workforce Development Boards lead the coordinated effort to assemble the staff required for employers, whether they are new to the area, expanding operations, or revamping or adding to their product line.
 - Businesses thrive when they have access to skilled employees that they need, leading to a better quality of life across the region.
- *For K-12 education: They want to ensure they are helping their students reach their future career goals.*
 - Workforce Development Boards lead local teams that work with businesses, and therefore understands what skills employers need, and connects employers and students in work-based learning opportunities.

- Connecting education and workforce development ensures that students are learning skills
- they will use in their future careers and that they understand what is needed to go begin a career or find a job out of high school.
- *For post-secondary education: They want to ensure their students are learning relevant skills and knowledge that will help them be successful in future careers.*
 - Workforce Development Boards lead local teams that work with businesses and therefore understands what skills employers need, and connects employers and students in work-based learning opportunities.
 - Intelligence from industry can shape curriculum and customized training, and ensure it is relevant so that students may achieve their career goals.
- *For community-based organizations: They often want to help individuals find and keep careers.*
 - Workforce Development Boards have resources to help support individuals in reaching their career goals through career information and guidance and access to education or training, which can lead to a sustainable income and help them build financial assets, such as savings, a house, or a car.

Storybank:

These examples can be used to show how the Workforce Development Boards impact the community and can be integrated into the messages. Below are a couple of examples, as well as ideas for new stories. These examples are meant to be added to and updated on a regular and ongoing basis.

- Workforce Development Boards, along with local government, education, and economic development partners create certified Work Ready Communities, which means there is a commitment to supplying a quality workforce to meet the needs of existing and potential industry, while at the same time providing residents with the skills needed to qualify for career opportunities that will support an increased quality of life. Certified Work-Ready Communities use the ACT® WorkKeys National Career Readiness Certificate to demonstrate the foundational skills of job seekers in a community. This allows:
 - i. businesses to easily communicate their workforce needs,
 - ii. individuals to know how to prepare themselves for a career,
 - iii. educators to close the skills gap, and
 - iv. economic developers to market the quality of the workforce in the community.
 More information can be found here: <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/index/about>
- The Workforce Development Boards, along with economic development and education partners, created a diverse talent pool for (-FILL IN EMPLOYER NAME OR SECTOR), which helped them (-ADD IN THE IMPACT IT HAD ON THEIR BUSINESS).
- By increasing career awareness about (- FILL IN EXAMPLE INDUSTRY -) industry, enrollments in career and technical education increased, which helped (X NUMBER) students reach a viable career path, and (X NUMBER OR TYPE OF) businesses have workers with the skills they need.
- By working with industry and education partners, Workforce Development Boards created a pre-apprenticeship program in (EXAMPLE INDUSTRY) that helped (X NUMBER) individuals increase their wages by (XX%) and achieve their career goals.