

# South Dakota Unified State Workforce Plan

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategic workforce vision of the State of South Dakota is to collaborate amongst government agencies, educators, businesses, and communities to develop a skilled workforce for employers in South Dakota. As South Dakota aligns efforts to make this vision a reality, three main goals will be the focus of our efforts as outlined in the 2020 Unified State Workforce Plan.

### INFORMED DECISIONS AND CAREER PATHWAY GUIDANCE

The first goal of South Dakota's Unified Workforce Plan is to prepare residents of South Dakota to make informed decisions and provide support during the career pathway journey. The South Dakota Workforce Development Council (WDC), the state workforce board, has identified the following priorities to successfully meet this goal:

- Engage youth in the workforce and ensure their awareness of the variety of educational and workforce options;
- Educate parents about the variety of educational and workforce options for their children; and
- Build a curriculum to assist schools in preparing youth for the workforce.

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation (DLR) continues the commitment to engage youth, parents, and educators to meet workforce needs. Reaching the next generation in South Dakota starts with meeting youth as early as possible by using partnerships with the education agencies and leaders in South Dakota. The South Dakota Department of Education (DOE) and the DLR offer **joint presentations** to educators with labor market resources and toolkits. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth statewide funding is being utilized in partnership with the DOE Career and Technical Education Division to support 10 DLR staff located in local school districts across the state. The primary responsibility of these **Career Launch SD Career Advisors** is to increase work-based learning opportunities for students. Work-based learning creates awareness of career options, especially those in South Dakota, resulting in informed decisions about career and educational pathways. To broaden the impact and reach of the Career Advisors, a regional model will be implemented as part of the 2020 Workforce Plan, with one Career Advisor serving several school districts. Each advisor will assist school districts in developing work-based learning opportunities, provide classroom presentations, coordinate business speakers, job shadows, internships, and industry tours. Career Advisors will also provide one-on-one career guidance.

A partnership between the South Dakota Board of Regents, the South Dakota Board of Technical Education, DOE, and DLR has been established to create **visual pathway roadmaps** to increase awareness of the career paths available in our state. Initial efforts have focused on high wage, high demand careers in South Dakota. This partnership will also identify **industry recognized credentials** in South Dakota to guide educators as they develop training programs.

South Dakota continues to lead the country in taking advantage of the U.S. DOL State Apprenticeship Expansion Grants. In 2020, DLR will implement **Registered Apprenticeship pathways programs** to give South Dakota high school students the opportunity to concurrently earn high school credit, Registered Apprenticeship hours, and post-secondary. Priority for funding will be offered to programs with occupations identified as high demand in South Dakota. DLR used July 1, 2019 funding to increase programs, develop a pathway program for high school students, and offset costs for existing Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Based on an expressed need for soft skills from employers in our state, DLR partnered with school districts to offer a hands-on **soft skills training** called Bring Your 'A' Game to Work, designed to teach foundational behaviors and values for employment. Participants to discover these skills through activities and group participation with an emphasis on the seven soft skill behaviors determined to be the most important: attendance, appearance, attitude, ambition, accountability, acceptance, and appreciation. This workshop is offered to both middle and high school students in South Dakota, providing the upcoming workforce with invaluable skills to meet the growing demand.

## BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

The second goal under the vision of the 2020 Workforce Plan focuses on South Dakota businesses and employers. DLR will increase partnerships with businesses to discover opportunities and identify solutions to address workforce needs by prioritizing relationship building with business and industry organizations and engaging businesses to assist in educating youth and parents about workforce opportunities in our state.

South Dakota Governor Noem has identified the week of April 20 – 24, 2020, as the **South Dakota Week of Work** in partnership with DLR, DOE, and South Dakota Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED), to promote work-based learning. The Week of Work will be filled with job shadows, industry tours, and classroom presentations by businesses for all high school sophomores statewide. Businesses will register to host an event and schools are asked to complete assessments with their students to connect them with the right industry. DLR hopes to catalyze partnerships between education, businesses, and workforce training efforts; and continue the Week of Work as an annual event.

The number of workforce programs offered by South Dakota government agencies can be confusing for employers to decipher and understand. DLR and the South Dakota Department of Human Services (DHS) WIOA Title IV will **streamline business engagement** and services as part of the 2020 Workforce Plan by offering joint DHS and DLR training for business engagement and more opportunities for businesses to learn more about services.

At the end of 2019, DLR held a lean event, called a kaizen, to review the current business engagement practices in One-Stop Career Centers statewide and identify areas for improvement. The workgroup documented several areas of opportunity and improvement. After the completion of Business U training and certification surrounding business engagement, DLR central office staff will work intensively with One-Stop Career Center to focus on developing speaking points and confidence for staff as they work with businesses to resolve their workforce needs. Training will also emphasize the importance of documenting business services to improve reporting accuracy. To assist with these efforts, DLR will implement a Customer Relationship Module in the SDWORKS data management system to identify engagement efforts with businesses not registered in SDWORKS. With assistance from the central office, One-Stop Centers will be encouraged to develop a business engagement plan for their community.

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

In the realm of lean, South Dakota's third goal surrounding the 2020 Workforce Plan is to engage a system of continuous improvement to ensure the alignment of workforce services. To do this, South Dakota must ensure coordination and collaboration with partner agencies and community partners.

South Dakota will improve **data sharing** among case management information systems impacting the four core programs under WIOA. Three different case management information systems are used by these four programs, each designed to meet the needs of the programs it serves. Sharing reporting elements will offer significant improvements to customer service, guidance to customers, federal and state reporting and performance, and communication between agencies. DLR will develop strategies between the South Dakota Bureau of Information and Telecommunications (BIT) and system vendors to develop electronic referral processes, combine or coordinate payroll features for work experiences, and improve the collection of unemployment insurance wage records from other states. Current efforts are in place to improve data sharing among secondary students, Board of Technical Education, Board of Regents, and DLR. Data share agreements and a data matching process are being explored.

DLR partners with the South Dakota Department of Corrections (DOC) by offering job search assistance and the National Career Readiness Certificate for soon-to-be released inmates. Through a WIOA Title II agreement, DLR also offers high school equivalency prep courses. DLR and DOC will review this partnership and identify ways to better **engage and retain ex-offenders** in the workforce to reduce recidivism rates. A survey will be sent to leadership in the local areas to learn more about current efforts, gaps, and needs.

The DLR and DHS plan to improve services to **rural areas** by improving services available remotely through the use of technology and increase presence and engagement in rural communities. The Adult Education and Literacy Distance Learning program is an example of remote services, offering online instruction and feedback as students prepare for the high school equivalency exam.

DLR is developing a module in SDWORKS to help streamline the process for providers to apply for the **Eligible Training Provider List** (ETPL) in order to save providers and DLR staff time and increase program access to our customers while meeting federal reporting requirements. This process will likely include a data share agreement with the Board of Regents and Board of Technical Education. DLR will continue to collaborate with the technical institutes and DOE to identify industry recognized credentials, visual career pathways, and Registered Apprenticeship opportunities.

South Dakota is a U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship state and will continue efforts to train One-Stop Career Center staff to engage with businesses and discuss **Registered Apprenticeship** opportunities for their workforce. While DLR staff do not have the expertise of the U.S. DOL Office of Apprenticeship State Director, they can assist in laying the foundation and offer as much assistance as possible to reduce the bottleneck historical frustrations with the federal Registered Apprenticeship model.

South Dakota will ensure continuous collaboration by holding annual meetings among WIOA partner programs to identify collaborative efforts, best practices, and areas for improvement. Locally, workforce partner meetings will take place quarterly and engage partners in local efforts impacting their workforce such as training, housing, and transportation. At the state level, the Core Partner Alignment Consortium (CPAC), comprised of staff from the four core programs will meet quarterly. The objective of each effort to **bring partners together** is to improve information sharing to benefit case management and increase engagement and services to rural areas by using technology and coordinated efforts while preventing duplication of services.