The California Awards for Performance Excellence

CALIFORNIA
PROSPECTOR
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Worknet of Merced County

2008 Application
FEEDBACK REPORT

The California Prospector is an assessment program designed and administered exclusively by the California Awards for Performance Excellence (CAPE) under the directorship of CCE (California Council for Excellence). The primary goal in offering this recognition program is to help organizations understand their strengths and opportunities for improvement as defined by the most current criteria of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award program.

Your application has been reviewed by two Senior-level CAPE examiners. They have considered your responses to the seven categories of the criteria and prepared the following Feedback Report for your consideration. It is important to remember that the examiners have prepared this Feedback Report exclusively from your application document and their interpretation of what it contained.

Congratulations for being recognized for your achievements with the California Prospector Award.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

a. The most important strengths or outstanding practices are:

o The applicant's operation involves co-located partner organizations. Demonstrating valuing partners, Worknet's leadership has chosen to include these partners as part of its own leadership group, in the strategic planning for the organization, and makes training available to partners' employees. Inclusion of key partners in these areas support the core values of teamwork and partnership, and help Worknet accomplish its mission more efficiently.

o The applicant recognizes excellent performance and accountability as principal success factors. To that end, regular reviews of performance occur in a number of areas. These include monthly reviews of customer satisfaction results, progress against the strategic plan, and process performance measures; bi-weekly review of performance against standards; and supervisors' weekly review of employee performance. These reviews help support management by fact and help develop a culture of data-driven decision making.

o Worknet has a strong customer focus. Their processes are designed to meet the customers' needs, requirements and expectations. A variety of approaches are being used to strengthen customer relationships. In general, they are a process oriented organization while it appears they are in the early stages of making some of these processes systematic.

o Multiple approaches are in place to demonstrate its governance and social responsibility including its core values which serve as a foundation for ethical expectations. In addition all Workforce Investment Board and executive leaders sign an annual conflict of interest and disclosure of economic interest form. Further, a five-step annual internal monitoring process is in place to ensure regulatory and ethical compliance. These approaches are supported by external audits and monitoring conducted on a regular basis.

b. The most significant concerns, weakness, or vulnerabilities are:

o The applicant's strategic goals do not address some of their identified strategic challenges. For example, it is unclear how Worknet is addressing the lack of industry in the area, the mobility of migrant workers, mortgage foreclosures and lack of affordable housing, and the unfunded mandates related to cost sharing agreements. This may impact Worknet's ability to demonstrate visionary leadership and that it is effectively addressing its strategic and competitive environment.

o It is unclear if several processes are deployed to partner staff in the organization. These include training on ethics, involvement in process improvements, and involvement in workgroups. This may limit Worknet's opportunities to capitalize on partner expertise as well as organizational learning.

o While Worknet has many sound, systematic processes in place throughout the organization, there is little evidence of any processes to collect data and information on the effectiveness or efficiency of these processes. Approaches that do not appear to be reviewed include leadership and communication; strategic planning; action plan development and deployment; and listening and learning methods. Without a review of these approaches, the organization may not recognize or identify opportunities to improve these processes and their results.

c. ***Considering the organization's key business factors, the most significant strengths, vulnerabilities, and/or gaps (data, comparisons, linkages) found in Category 7 are:***

o The applicant shows sustained positive results in Customer Satisfaction for job seekers (Figures 7.2-1 through 7.2-5). For example, Worknet achieved customer satisfaction scores above 92% for the past five years in the following indicators: Time it Took for Staff to Assist, Get the Information Needed, Help You Today, and Satisfaction with Services. These results may demonstrate Worknet's effectiveness in meeting key customer requirements as well as customer driven excellence.

o Positive comparative results are presented in Process Effectiveness Outcomes relative to the EER Standard, (Figure 7.5-1 and 7.5-2), the Retention Standard (Figure 7.5-3) and two neighboring LWIAs (Figure 7.5-8 through 7.5-10, 7.5-12 and 7.5-13). These outcomes demonstrate Worknet's commitment to its core values of Customer Service and Results.

o A number of expected results are not presented. For business customers, no Product and Services Outcomes, Customer-Focused Outcomes or Process Effectiveness Outcomes are evident. In addition, no results relative to Customer-Perceived Value, Customer Loyalty, Customer Complaints, or Organizational Citizenship (support of key communities) are presented. This may limit Worknet's ability to demonstrate its organizational effectiveness in these key areas as well as its focus on results and creating value.

o Many results, where segmentation by location would be expected, were not segmented. Analysis of results by location may uncover variations in performance to identify opportunities for improvement as well as best practices that may contribute to organizational learning.

1.   Leadership

The *Leadership* Category examines how your organization's senior leaders guide and sustain your organization. Also examined are your organization's governance and how your organization addresses its ethical, legal and community responsibilities.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

1.1   Senior Leadership: How do your senior leaders lead?
Describe how senior leaders guide and sustain your organization. Describe how senior leaders communicate with employees and encourage high performance.

1.2   Governance and Social Responsibilities: How do you govern and address your social responsibilities?
Describe your organization's governance system. Describe how your organization addresses its responsibilities to the public, ensures ethical behavior, and practices good citizenship.

1.1   Senior Leadership

Strengths:

o   The Worknet Leadership Team (WLT) consists of the Assistant Director and supervisors, as well as representation from both mandatory and voluntary partners. The WLT developed Worknet's Vision and Mission statements in 2005 (Figure P.1a-1). Three approaches are used by the WLT to guide and sustain the organization: 1) the use of the Vision, Mission and Core Values as operating principles; 2) Strategic Goals and Objectives to keep the organization aligned; and 3) a Balanced Scorecard to track progress. The Mission, Vision, and Core Values are posted throughout the facility and discussed in staff meetings. Progress toward achieving the Strategic Goals and Objectives is reviewed, at a minimum, on a monthly basis with the staff and WLT, in alignment with Worknet's core value of "Results."

o   The applicant maintains a separate scorecard for tracking performance against WIA performance standards. The standards must be met for the organization to be eligible for continued funding. Performance is reviewed on a regular basis to identify opportunities for improvement, and ensure standards are achieved.

o   The WLT utilizes three approaches to encourage high performance throughout the workforce: Decentralized Decision Making, Balanced Scorecard, and Performance Evaluation System. The Baldrige Criteria principles are also used by leadership to help communicate and create an environment that encourages high performance.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   It is not clear how the WLT uses the organization's Mission, Vision, and Core Values specifically to guide and sustain the overall organization. For example, the process is not apparent for how the WLT established the operating principles in 2005, which include the Mission, Vision, and Core values, to ensure their effectiveness in guiding the organization.

o   The applicant notes that it is important that the Mission, Vision, and Core Values be understood by their partners, but other than posting them in the facility, no direct approach for that communication and deployment is present. This may impact Worknet's ability to guide the entire organization, which does include its co-located partners.

o   It is unclear how senior leadership reviews its leadership and communication approaches for effectiveness and potential improvements, including the three approaches for guiding and sustaining the organization, the three approaches to encouraging high performance, or periodic review/confirmation of Mission, Vision and Core Values. Without evaluating and improving these approaches, it is unclear how Worknet determines their effectiveness, and ensures they meet the evolving needs of the organization.

1.2   Governance and Social Responsibilities

Strengths:

o   The overall organizational structure provides a base for oversight, governance and meeting social responsibilities. The on-site Worknet supervisors report to the Department of Workforce Investment Assistant Director who oversees all operations. The Assistant Director reports to the Department of Workforce Investment Director, who, in turn, reports to the Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the County Executive Officer, and the County Board of Supervisors. This approach may ensure accountability of management actions, and aligns Worknet to its core value of "Integrity."

o   The organization's leaders and staff jointly developed the eight Core Values (Figure P.1a-2), which include integrity, responsibility, and valuing customers as a way of deploying ethical behavior expectations. All Board of Supervisors, WIB and executive leaders sign an annual conflict of interest and disclosure of economic interest form. All Board of Supervisors and WIB meetings must be conducted as a public hearing to ensure disclosure to the constituency and maintain transparency. Bi-annual training given by the County on four ethics-related topics is mandatory for all staff.

o   The applicant uses a five-step annual internal monitoring process to ensure compliance with regulatory and contractual requirements as well as ethical practices. The steps include: 1) Desk Review; 2) On-Site Reviews; 3) Exit Conference; 4) Finalizing Report; and 5) Follow-Up. Any detection of fraud or abuse is reported to the Compliance Review Division within 24 hours, and then to the State. The process appears to be well integrated with Worknet's highly regulated environment and demonstrates its commitment to its core values of integrity and ethical behavior.

o   Worknet supports their key community through staff (all level) involvement in local school site councils, advisory committees, various boards, and other community organizations as well as participating in health fairs, the American Heart Walk, United Way and Relay for Life. This approach may assist Worknet in its recognition as a viable resource and partner in the community it serves.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although Worknet has an approach to handling ethical breaches during the internal monitoring process, it is unclear how they are handled by the organization when they occur in other areas, such as the WIB level. For example, it is unclear how the approach is deployed to ensure recusals in WIB meetings occur as required by law or its own by-laws. In addition, there is no evidence of a process for Worknet to collect data and information on the effectiveness of their processes for pro-actively preventing ethical or other governance type violations, or for the purpose of identifying opportunities to improve those approaches.

- o Although the County's bi-annual training is considered mandatory for all staff, it is unclear if this training is mandated for Worknet's partners who also operate at the site and provide services to customers. Without training for the partners, who are perceived by the public as Worknet staff, ethical lapses may occur and may put the organization at risk.

2.   Strategic Planning

The *Strategic Planning* Category examines how your organization develops strategic objectives and action plans. Also examined are how your chosen strategic objectives and action plans are deployed and changed if circumstances require, and how progress is measured.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

2.1   Strategy Development: How do you develop your strategy?
Describe how your organization determines its strategic challenges and advantages. Describe how your organization establishes its strategy and strategic objectives to address these challenges and enhance its advantages. Summarize your organization's key strategic objectives and their related goals.

2.2   Strategy Deployment: How do you deploy your strategy?
Describe how your organization converts its strategic objectives into action plans. Summarize your organization's action plans and related key performance measures or indicators. Project your organization's future performance relative to key comparisons on these performance measures or indicators.

2.1   Strategy Development

Strengths:

- The applicant uses a seven-step Strategic Planning Process (Figure 2.1-1) to develop its strategic goals and objectives. Strategic challenges and advantages are identified through the use of environmental scan data and a SWOT Analysis. The strategic plan is developed and revised by the WLT with input from partners and staff.

- Inputs to the strategic plan include an Environmental Scan, SWOT Analysis, and consideration of the WIB's goals and Five Year Plan. Analysis of current Balanced Scorecard performance, economic and financial data, survey results, and real-time information from Business Services and Job Development are also incorporated.

- The applicant has identified four strategic goals: 1) Empower and develop staff that can effectively assess and meet customer needs; 2) Assess and meet applicant system needs; 3) Assist job seekers to be fully prepared for the labor market; and 4) Assess and respond to business needs (employer). Each strategic goal has defined supporting action plans, which may assist Worknet in the deployment of those action plans as well as ensuring their achievement.

Opportunities for Improvement:

- Although it is noted that strategic goals are developed to address Worknet's strategic challenges, it is unclear how the strategic goals and objectives address the identified strategic challenges noted in the Organizational Profile, including: the lack of industry in the area, the mobility of migrant workers, mortgage foreclosures and lack of affordable housing, and the unfunded mandates related to cost sharing agreements. Without addressing these key strategic challenges, this may impact Worknet's ability to achieve its vision, "To deliver a skilled, competitive workforce that ensures a diverse and prosperous economy."

- While Worknet has identified four strategic goals, only the first goal appears to fit the definition of a goal as provided in the Baldrige Criteria. The other three appear to be descriptions of the services provided by Worknet. As defined in the Criteria, strategic goals ("strategic objectives" in the Criteria), "refer to an organization's articulated aims or responses to address major change or improvement, competitiveness or social issues, and business advantages." Three of Worknet's four goals do not appear to focus on major change or improvement. Without clear strategic goals, the organization may not recognize what it must achieve to ensure its long-term sustainability.

- Although the strategic planning process includes a review of the previous year's plan relative to achievement, it is unclear how Worknet reviews the strategic planning process itself for effectiveness, to identify potential improvements, and ensure the process generates the most important strategic goals and objectives needed for continued organizational success.

2.2   Strategy Deployment

Strengths:

o   Action plans are developed as the last step of the Strategic Planning Process (Figure 2.1-1). Plans are developed with input from the WLT, staff and partners. Actions supporting the strategic goals are brainstormed, then streamlined and aligned to scorecard measures. Timelines and those responsible for completing the action items are incorporated, and completed action plans are integrated into the strategic plan document.

o   The strategic plan is deployed through discussion at regular meetings to all staff and partners. Overall progress on the strategic plan is reviewed at least monthly with staff. Progress on specific action items is discussed based on timelines specified by the project.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although a sample of an action plan is provided, a summary of Worknet's action plans and their related key performance measures is not provided. Therefore, it is unclear how the action plans demonstrate that Worknet is effectively addressing its strategic goals and objectives to ensure they are achieved.

o   Many of Worknet's action plans look to be ongoing activities instead of, "details of resource commitments and time horizons for accomplishment." (Baldrige definition of an action plan) In the sample Scorecard Strategic Action Plan provided (Figure 2.1-2), no timeline for completion of the action plan is presented, and no responsible parties are listed. Without allocation of resources or timelines, Worknet may find it difficult to ensure they are successfully accomplished.

o   Several of the metrics presented on the Scorecard Strategic Action Plan do not appear to have measures or indicators. For example, the metric for Item 1.b., "Community Service and Satisfaction Information will be shared at partner meetings" is "Verified through agendas, minutes and sign-in sheets." This appears to be a statement of how the data for the measure will be collected as opposed to a specific measure to ensure an outcome is achieved. For example, measures or metrics such as the number or percentage of partner meetings where the community service and satisfaction information was shared are not apparent. Without specific measures for action plans, it may be difficult for the Worknet to determine if they are making appropriate progress and clearly impacting the achievement of their goals, objectives, as well as their performance standards.

o   While progress on action plans is regularly reviewed, it is unclear how Worknet reviews its action plan development and deployment process for effectiveness, identify improvements, and address those improvements. The absence of such a review and improvement process may limit Worknet in ensuring that its action plans are developed

effectively to assist in achievement of performance standards, as well as its mission, "Worknet responds to the needs of our business community and jobseekers to enhance our community's quality of life."

3.   Customer and Market Focus

The *Customer and Market Focus* Category examines how your organization determines the requirements, needs, expectations, and preferences of customers and markets. Also examined is how your organization builds relationships with customers and determines the key factors that lead to customer acquisition, satisfaction, loyalty and retention and to business expansion and sustainability.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

3.1   Customer and Market Knowledge: How do you obtain and use customer and market knowledge?
Describe how your organization determines requirements, needs, expectations, and preferences of customers and markets to ensure the continuing relevance of your products and services and to develop new business opportunities.

3.2   Customer Relationships and Satisfaction: How do you build relationships and grow customer satisfaction and loyalty?
Describe how your organization builds relationships to acquire, satisfy, and retain customers and to increase customer loyalty. Describe also how your organization determines customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

3.1   Customer and Market Knowledge

Strengths:

o   The applicant determines customer requirements, needs, expectations, and preferences through a variety of mechanisms. These include face-to-face interactions, a weekly survey of job seekers, training evaluations, the swipe card system, e-mail, and the internal monitoring process. This information is gathered and analyzed to identify opportunities to better meet customer needs. Recent improvements implemented as a result of analyzing customer data were streamlining the front desk process and the installation of a new copier, fax machine and color printer for customer use. This approach may demonstrate Worknet's commitment to its core value of "Customer Service."

o   Customer requirements have been identified for Worknet's two customer segments, employers/business and job seekers (Figure 3.1-1). Requirements for employers and businesses include: user friendly processes, accurate information, qualified candidate referrals, and timely response. Similarly, requirements for job seekers include user friendly processes, timely response/service, as well as courteous staff and viable job leads.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although Worknet has identified customer requirements for each of its customer segments, a process is not evident to aggregate data and information from all of the listening and learning sources to clearly determine customers' needs, expectations and preferences. For example, how Worknet aggregates and analyzes the data collected from the meetings with the Employment Resource Center (ERC) staff, WLT workgroup/team meetings, general WLT meetings, partner meetings, and Department of WI management team meetings is unclear. Without a systematic approach to the collection and analysis of the data and information collected through the various listening and learning processes, Worknet may have difficulty in the accurate assessment and determination of its customers' needs, expectations, and preferences.

o   While a number of listening and learning approaches to gathering information from job seekers are described, it is unclear if Worknet is gathering similar information on its employers/business customer segment. Without similar approaches to this customer segment, Worknet may not fully understand what employers/business customers desire from them.

o   There is no evidence of a process for Worknet to collect data and information on the effectiveness of their listening and learning approaches. Without a systematic approach for evaluating and improving its listening and learning methods, this may limit Worknet's ability to accurately determine its customer requirements and ensure they are met.

3.2   Customer Relationships and Satisfaction

Strengths:

o   The applicant has identified four strategies for building relationships with its customers. These are: 1) partnerships and a seamless service delivery system; 2) customer service; 3) customer feedback; and 4) meeting customer requirements. The partnerships and seamless service delivery system allow for convenient service for customers, both job seekers and businesses.

o   Customer service techniques are modified for each customer segment. Core/Universal job seekers are ensured that staff is readily available to assist them. Intensive/Training job seekers and business customers are each assigned an Employment and Training Specialist (ETS). Customers assigned an ETS also receive follow-up service to ensure satisfaction. Customer service techniques are discussed with all staff during both regular meetings and trainings.

o   Job seekers and employers may communicate their dissatisfaction by registering complaints via email, telephone, or in person at the Employment Resource Centers. The formal written grievance/complaint policy is provided to all customers enrolled in the program. Timelines and escalation steps are clearly established for all written complaints and/or grievances. All staff are trained and empowered to handle customer complaints. These processes ensure that customer complaints receive the attention required to resolve issues, demonstrating alignment to Worknet's core value of "customer service."

o   Customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction of jobseekers are determined through a Customer Satisfaction Survey (CSS). These are distributed each Monday, a frequency based on feedback from customers. Job seekers are asked to rate their satisfaction with Worknet on their five key customer requirements. Employers/business customer satisfaction is measured through focus groups. Usage of individual services is also tracked through the swipe card system. CSS results are reviewed monthly, and the survey instrument itself is reviewed annually by the WLT.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although the WLT reviews monthly the success of customer-focused operating principles and the CSS on an annual basis, there is little evidence of a systematic process to reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of all of Worknet's approaches to building customer relationships for the purpose of identifying opportunities for improvement. For example, it is not evident that the approaches such as, 1) partnerships and a seamless service delivery system, and 2) customer service, are evaluated and improved to demonstrate that they are effective in building customer relationships. The absence of evaluating and improving its approaches, may impact Worknet's efforts towards its core value of "customer service."

o   Worknet reports that monitoring the use of their various services through customers (job seekers) signing into the system is a means of determining customer satisfaction; however it is not clear how usage of the systems determines satisfaction. For example, it is not how the information gathered is analyzed to determine actual satisfaction with the services, as opposed to customers using the services because those are the ones available. This may impact Worknet's ability to ensure that services available are truly meeting the needs of its customers.

o   It is not clear what systematic approach is utilized to collect data and information from the employers in the focus group to determine their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction and identify opportunities for improvement. For example, how the information collected was analyzed and results used to determine satisfaction and improve services to employers, is not evident. Further, focus group results are not shown in section 7.2 to demonstrate that the information collected was aggregated and analyzed for improvement. The absence of systematic approaches for determining satisfaction of its employer/business customer segment may impact Worknet's ability to demonstrate the full deployment of its core value of "customer service."

4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management

The *Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management* Category examines how your organization selects, gathers, analyzes, manages, and improves its data, information, and knowledge assets and how it manages its information technology. Also examined is how your organization reviews and uses reviews to improve its performance.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

4.1   Measurement, Analysis, and Review of Organizational Performance: How do you measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance?
Describe how your organization measures, analyzes, aligns, reviews, and improves its performance through the use of data and information at all levels and in all parts of your organization. Describe how you systematically use the results of reviews to evaluate and improve processes.

4.2   Management of Information, Information Technology and Knowledge: How do you manage your information, information technology, and organizational knowledge?
Describe how your organization ensures the quality and availability of needed data and information, software, and hardware for your workforce, suppliers, partners, collaborators, and customers. Describe how your organization builds and manages its knowledge assets.

4.1   Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance

Strengths:

o   Worknet collects data and information primarily through their Customer Sign-In/Swipe Card Process, Customer Satisfaction Survey, and Case Management System. Some of the measures they collect are: number of visits and services being accessed, partner referrals and the results of the referrals, and results for marketing efforts. These data are collected in the Balanced Scorecard and reviewed regularly, in alignment with its core value of "results."

o   All staff and partners' staff may access organizational performance information on the intranet. Performance information is discussed at All Managers meetings, partner meetings and WLT meetings. Performance relative to performance standards is reviewed bi-weekly with staff, shared with the WIB at bi-monthly meetings, and reported monthly to the Department of WI.

o   The applicant uses a six-step Performance Review Process (Figure 4.1-1) to ensure it meets its performance goals. Performance that is not meeting targets is analyzed to identify root causes. Changes to be made in response to performance data are communicated through e-mail if small, and if large, changes are implemented through revised policies, procedures, or with an action plan.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although a six-step Performance Review Process is described, it is unclear how the process is deployed to partners. For example, how changes are made and implemented when the change involves or impacts one of Worknet's co-located partners is not evident. This may impact Worknet's efforts to deploy its performance excellence strategies throughout the organization.

o   No process is evident to evaluate and improve the six-step Performance Review Process for effectiveness. Without such an approach, it is unclear how Worknet demonstrates that the Performance Review Process ensures it will meet its performance standards.

4.2   Management of Information, Information Technology and Knowledge

Strengths:

o   The applicant makes data and information available to its staff and partners through the Internet and intranet on their desktop computers. Job seekers access information through desktops in the Resource Centers and case managers maintain both paper and electronic case files. Data relative to supplier performance is available on the intranet, Internet, at Resource Centers, and is available to staff, management, customers, and suppliers. Some data are not available electronically, such as the results of the Customer Satisfaction Surveys; however these data are made available on a monthly basis to staff and management.

o   WIA customer data quality is ensured by allowing input and change data access to trained staff with user identification and passwords. Other data also have limited change access to ensure its integrity and confidentiality.

o   Data security is enabled through multiple methods, including a system that is monitored by the State. Data and Software security include limiting parameters for data entry. User numbers and passwords help limit access to sensitive information. Access to fiscal data is limited to qualified staff. Further, all staff are required to read, understand and sign Worknet's Computer and Data Network Appropriate Use Policy. Policies include restrictions on customer information which may not be released without prior written release from the customer. These methods demonstrate Worknet's commitment to its core value of "integrity."

o   Daily back-ups are made of system data so information would be available in an emergency. Data are backed up through the County's system and maintained at the offsite County office, providing an additional level of security and safety should an emergency occur at any of the Centers.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Other than providing information on economic development, it is unclear how the Worknet ensures the availability of needed information to its business customers. For example, it is unclear if businesses also access information through the Centers and Internet. This may impact Worknet's ability to demonstrate its core value of "customer service" with this key customer segment.

o   Aside from the use of workgroups and trainings, it is unclear if Worknet has a systematic approach in place to build and manage its knowledge assets. Without a systematic approach in place, it is unclear how Worknet ensures that people have the knowledge to do their work to the best of their ability, improve processes, and add value for the customer and organization.

o   While multiple mechanisms keep customer information on computers secure, it is unclear how Worknet is keeping its paper files on customers secure other than preventing their being taken home. Because Worknet relies on case files and other paper documentation, the absence of a systematic approach for maintaining their security may create a risk for the organization and impact its core value of "integrity."

## 5.	Workforce Focus

The *Workforce Focus* Category examines how your organization engages, manages, and develops your workforce to utilize its full potential in alignment with your organization's overall mission, strategy, and action plans. The Category examines your ability to assess workforce capability and capacity needs and to build a workforce environment conducive to high performance.

Issues to Address in California Prospector Award Application:

**5.1	Workforce Engagement: How do you engage your workforce to achieve organizational and personal success?**
Describe how your organization engages, compensates, and rewords your workforce to achieve high performance. Describe how members of your workforce, including leaders, are developed to achieve high performance. Describe how you assess workforce engagement and use the results to achieve higher performance.

**5.2	Workforce Environment: How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment?**
Describe how your organization manages workforce capability and capacity to accomplish the work of the organization. Describe how your organization maintains a safe, secure, and supportive work climate.

5.1   Workforce Engagement

Strengths:

o   Worknet utilizes workgroups to design and deploy work processes. This engages the workforce in determining the most efficient way to achieve high performance and meet the customers' requirements. This approach demonstrates Worknet's commitment to its core value of "teamwork."

o   A wide range of employee recognition is utilized by Worknet, from leaders recognizing staff daily with emails to formal written commendations and celebrations for teams or organizational achievement. An All-Star Award is utilized to recognize employees for significantly high performance.

o   All staff are offered training as a way to develop and achieve high performance. Training available includes teleconferences, webinars, videos/CDs, and external trainings. Scheduled trainings are announced in meetings, newsletters and on the intranet. Partners also share training opportunities with Worknet's staff, and Worknet makes its video/CD training library available to partners. The applicant is working towards having all staff complete the National Workforce Professional Tier I-Certification Exam.

o   Workforce engagement is assessed using an annual Zoomerang survey to maintain confidentiality. Results are analyzed and reviewed by the WLT to identify opportunities for improvement. A Baldrige-based self-assessment has also helped to identify opportunities related to employee satisfaction and engagement.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   While training is available to both staff and the leaders of Worknet, it is unclear how the training directly impacts achievement of high performance. For example, how training on Job Search Skills, Labor Market Information, and General Helping Skills directly affects performance against the WIA standards is unclear. Without a direct linkage between training and organizational performance, it is unclear whether Worknet is providing training in the most critical areas and competencies needed for performance excellence.

o   Although Worknet uses workgroups to design and deploy its work processes, it is unclear if all employees are engaged in workgroups, as appropriate. It is also unclear if workgroups include partners who are co-located at the Centers. Without full deployment of workgroups, it may be difficult for Worknet to ensure their effectiveness towards employee engagement and satisfaction.

o   A process is not apparent for how Worknet evaluates the effectiveness of their workforce engagement approaches.   Without a systematic approach in place for evaluating its approaches, determining their effectiveness, and improving them,

Worknet may miss opportunities for ensuring it is meeting its workforce key requirements that contribute to engagement and satisfaction.

5.2   Workforce Environment

Strengths:

o   The applicant assesses workforce capacity on an annual basis using the Department of WI's annual operational plan and input from managers and supervisors. Workforce capability is assessed annually through performance evaluations, focusing on the 13 competency categories (Figure 5.1-1). Employees also provide input on their development needs.

o   The annual employee engagement survey is used to collect information on how employees perceive the work climate. An employee grievance process allows employees an avenue for registering dissatisfaction.

o   A complete set of employee benefits, including paid vacations, sick leave, paid holidays, bereavement leave, health insurance, disability and life insurance, and retirement benefits is available to all Worknet employees, thereby addressing its principle success factor of employee focus.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   While individual Worknet employee capability is determined during the annual performance evaluation process, no process is evident to determine Worknet overall organizational capability. Without such a process it may be difficult for Worknet to identify organizational opportunities to exceed its performance standards.

o   Worknet utilizes a commercially available on-line surveying system to conduct employee empowerment surveys annually. However, it is not clear how the information collected from the surveys is analyzed for the purposes of improving employee satisfaction and the achievement of high performance. Additionally, although an employee grievance process is available, it is not clear how data and information from this process is collected, analyzed, aggregated, and action plans developed to prevent grievances or improve general employee satisfaction or performance.

o   While the organization maintains a supportive work climate, other than having employees attend Violence in the Workplace training, it is unclear how a safe and secure work environment is maintained. This may be of particular importance to Worknet considering the diversity of customers served during the most difficult situations and economic times.

6.   Process Management

The *Process Management* Category examines how your organization determines its core competencies and work systems and how it designs, manages, and improves its key processes for implementing those work systems to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability. Also examined is your readiness for emergencies.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

6.1   Work System Design: How do you design your work systems?
Describe how your organization determines its core competencies and designs its work systems and key processes to deliver customer value, prepare for potential emergencies, and achieve organizational success and sustainability.

6.2   Work Process Management and Improvement: How do you manage and improve your key organizational work processes?
Describe how your organization implements, manages, and improves its key work processes to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability.

6.1   Work System Design

Strengths:

o   Worknet's core competencies are determined annually during the strategic planning process, SWOT analysis. As such, they are included in the strategic planning process and the establishment of the organization's strategic goals and objectives. Core competencies include: Vouchering for Enterprise Zones, Internet Job Search, Skills Assessment, Basic Skills, Rapid Response, Business Services, Career Workshops, and Grant Administration.

o   Four inputs are used to guide work system design: 1) customer needs; 2) regulatory requirements; 3) WIB vision and input; and 4) best practices. Information from each of these inputs helps the WLT design work systems that deliver customer value and achieve organizational success and sustainability. Work systems are reviewed at least annually to ensure effectiveness.

o   Process design is accomplished by cross-functional work teams using a seven-step process. Steps include: 1) identifying customer needs; 2) regulatory check, and strategic alignment; 3) researching best practices; 4) identifying organizational capacity; 5) design of the program/product/service including establishment of performance measures; 6) implementation; and 7) post implementation assessment. This approach may contribute to Worknet's ability to design processes that meet its customer key requirements.

o   Worknet follows all state and county guidelines for emergency preparedness, including the establishment of an emergency plan. Multiple sites provide access in the event of an emergency closure and nightly information technology backups provide data and information in the event of a site loss.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Although Worknet has an emergency plan in place, it is unclear how this plan is communicated to staff and appropriate partners to ensure workplace preparedness in a disaster or emergency. Without full deployment of its emergency plan, the Worknet may be placing itself, its employees, partners, and customers at risk during emergency situations.

6.2   Work Process Management and Improvement

Strengths:

o   Worknet processes are implemented as part of the seven step design process (Step 6) and their short term effectiveness reviewed in Step 7, Post Assessment. This provides the organization with an opportunity to determine the effectiveness of the new process and make improvements as required to meet its key customer requirements as well as its performance standards.

o   The applicant manages its key work processes through policies and procedures. All new employees including partners are oriented to the policies and procedures. Revisions and updates are communicated at meetings, through e-mail, in memos and on the intranet. Partner staff are re-oriented once a year to ensure they are up to date as well.

o   The organization has identified their key processes as: voucher processing, job matching, case management, staff development, monitoring, grant management, and career assessments (Figure 6.2-1). The key requirements have also been identified and include: access to tax credits, qualified job candidates, and accurate reporting. Similarly, measures for each process have also been identified and include: satisfaction rates, number of job placements, and number of audit exceptions (Figure 6.2-1). Further, the internal monitoring system helps ensure key work processes meet all regulatory, contractual and supplier requirements. This approach may assist the applicant in tracking performance of its processes to ensure achievement of its performance goals.

o   Process improvements are collected from all staff. The WLT assesses potential process improvements using five criteria including: impact to products, services, and satisfaction; impact to staff; and impact to organizational performance. Once an improvement is identified as a priority, a work team uses the Rapid Workflow Process Model, a four-step approach, to improve the process.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Worknet's Rapid Workflow Process Model for existing work processes appear to be based on issues resulting from those processes, as opposed to a systematic or pro-active improvement. Without systematic evaluation and improvement of its key work processes, Worknet may find difficulty in preventing issues or identifying issues before they become serious or costly.

o   Although Worknet states that work teams use the Rapid Workflow Process Model to improve processes, it is unclear how employees are trained in the use of this model and whether or not partner staff are included in evaluation and improvement of the processes. Without training or full deployment, Worknet may miss opportunities for

creative and innovative improvements to processes that may result in exceeding its performance standards as well as customer expectations.

7.   Results

The *Results* Category examines your organization's performance and improvement in all key areas – product and service outcomes, customer-focused outcomes, financial and marketplace outcomes, workforce-focused outcomes, process-effectiveness outcomes, and leadership outcomes. Performance levels are examined relative to those of competitors and other organizations providing similar products and services.

Editor's Note: Please focus your responses to the following questions by citing specific Results you have achieved. Charts and graphs are encouraged to summarize your Results. Avoid anecdotal responses that cannot be validated by statistical data.

Issues to Address in Your California Prospector Award Application:

7.1   Product and Service Outcomes: What are your product and service performance results?
Summarize your organization's key product and service performance results. Segment your results by product and service types and groups, customer groups, and market segments, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.2   Customer-Focused Outcomes: What are your customer-focused performance results?
Summarize your organization's key customer-focused results for customer satisfaction and customer-perceived value, including customer loyalty. Segment your results by product and service types or groups, customer groups, and market segments, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.3   Financial and Market Outcomes: What are your financial and marketplace performance results?
Summarize your organization's key financial and marketplace performance results by customer or market segments, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.4   Workforce-Focused Outcomes: What are your workforce-focused performance results?
Summarize your organization's workforce-focused results for workforce engagement and for your workforce environment. Segment your results to address the diversity of your workforce and to address your workforce groups and segments, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.5   Process Effectiveness Outcomes: What are your process effectiveness results?
Summarize your organization's key operational performance results that contribute to the improvement of organizational effectiveness, including your organization's readiness for emergencies. Segment your results by product and service types and groups, by processes and location, and by market segments, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.6   Leadership Outcomes:
Summarize your organization's key governance and senior leadership results, including evidence of strategic plan accomplishments, ethical behavior, fiscal accountability, legal compliance, social responsibility, and organizational citizenship. Segment your results by organizational units, as appropriate. Include appropriate comparative data.

7.1   Product and Service Outcomes

Strengths:

o *Core Services Total Served for Worknet* is a measure of customer utilization of the services provided by Worknet. There has been a steady increase in many of these services from PY03/04 to PY07/08, such as: CalJOBS Internet Job Search from 6,081 to 24,003, Resume writing from 2,287 to 6,726, and Typing from 885 to 2,135 (Figure 7.1-2). These results indicate an increase in Worknet services and may demonstrate its core value of "customer service."

o The *Total Participants* in *Intensive and Training Services* (Figure 7.1-4) is also a measure of customer participation in Worknet's services. While there was some reduction in Adult participants from PY02/03 to PY04/05, there has been a steady increase from PY04/05 (270) to PY06/07 (532).

o Although the number of Adult participants entering employment for PY04/05 and PY05/06 was below PY03/04 levels, there has been a significant improvement from PY05/06 (145) to PY06/07 (365) to the highest level in the last 5 PY's (Figure 7.1-5). These results may demonstrate the effectiveness of Worknet's strategies towards its core value of "results."

Opportunities for Improvement:

o Worknet has identified that Job Placements within industry distributions, are an important measure of the overall success of the Core Services provided. However, results are only provided for PY06/07 with no history to determine if these are improvements, or comparisons to establish their current performance (Figure 7.1-3).

o While the number of Adult participants in Intensive and Training Services (Figure 7.1-4) has been increasing over the last 3 PY's, there was a reduction in Dislocated Worker participants from PY05/06 (289) to PY06/07 (246), making it unclear if Worknet is effectively targeting this key customer segment.

o There was a steady decline in the number of Displaced Workers entering employment following Intensive and Training Services from PY02/03 (77) to PY04/05 (47) (Figure 7.1-6). While there was a significant improvement in PY05/06 to 167, PY06/07 dropped again to 136. These results may make it difficult for Worknet to demonstrate that it is effectively providing quality services and meeting the needs of its Displaced Workers.

o No Product and Service Outcomes relative to the business customer are presented. The absence of any results for its business customers, make it unclear whether the applicant is effectively meeting the needs of this key customer segment.

o   Results presented are not segmented by location. The absence of segmentation of results per Center, may keep Worknet from discerning opportunities for improvement as well as best practices specific to any one of the locations.

7.2   Customer-Focused Outcomes

Strengths:

o   Customer satisfaction results (Figures 7.2-1 through 7.2-5) demonstrate sustained positive performance. For example, Worknet achieved customer satisfaction scores above 92% for the past five years in the following indicators: Time it Took for Staff to Assist, Get the Information Needed, Help You Today, and Satisfaction with Services. These results demonstrate that Worknet may be meeting its key customer requirement for Job Seekers in these areas (Figure 3.1-1).

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Worknet considers *Daily Sign In's* as a measure of customer satisfaction (Figure 7.1-1). While the results for PY07/08 (47,722) show an improvement over PY06/07 (44,620), there was a steady decline from a high in PY02/03 of 53,378 to the PY06/07 low of 44,620. The PY07/08 results are also well below the PY02/03 and PY03/04 results making it difficult to determine positive customer satisfaction levels based on these results.

o   Although the application notes employer satisfaction is gathered through focus groups, no Customer-Focused Outcomes relative to satisfaction, customer-perceived value or customer loyalty are presented for the employer and business customer. Without a complete understanding of its employer customer perceptions, Worknet may not be able to fully utilize its principle success factor of customer focus.

o   Although complaints are analyzed by type for purposes of eliminating root causes, no results relative to customer complaints are presented. This may make it difficult for Worknet to demonstrate the effectiveness of its customer focused process.

7.3   Financial and Market Results

Strengths:

o A key financial performance measure for Worknet is the amount of WIA funding allocated to them. Following reductions from PY03/04 to PY 06/07 for Adults and to PY07/08 for dislocated workers, there have been increases in both of these categories (Figure 7.3-1). Additionally, Worknet states that other WIA's have suffered as much as a 30% reduction in these allocations; however, they have recovered so that their Adult reduction is only 8% and their Displaced Worker reduction is 17%.

o While the WIA funding has been reduced, Grants have increased from about $100,000 in 2003 to about $875,000 in 2007 (Figure 7.3-2). This may assist Worknet in addressing its sustainability and achievement of its mission, "Worknet responds to the needs of our business community and jobseekers to enhance our community's quality of life."

o Worknet has had zero audit exceptions, deobligations, and disallowed costs for the past five years. These results may demonstrate its accountability, the effectiveness of its monitoring and auditing processes, and its core value of "Integrity."

Opportunities for Improvement:

o Another source of income for the WIA is revenue generating contracts, where other organizations utilize Worknet resources or expertise for a fee. However, the Contract Amount has decreased from a high of $62,500 in 2006 to a low of $20,000 in 2008 (Figure 7.3-4), making it unclear whether these results demonstrate effective financial outcomes in this regard.

o Other than noting other LWIAs have reported up to a 30% reduction in funding, no comparative data or marketplace performance is presented in this Item. Without these results, Worknet may not be able to fully demonstrate its financial effectiveness.

o Although Worknet provides results for its funding allocations and grants awarded, no results are presented to show its effectiveness in the administration of these tax dollars. For example, results are not presented to demonstrate a balanced budget other than meeting its expenditure goal (Figure 7.3-5). This may impact Worknet's ability to demonstrate it effectively addresses its core competency of grant administration.

7.4   Workforce-Focused Outcomes

Strengths:

o   Employee Empowerment Survey results show that nearly three-quarters of respondents
    are satisfied that they have the Support and Authority to Make Decisions (Figure 7.4-1)
    and that their leaders Encourage Innovation to Improve Things (Figure 7.4-2). For
    example, 75% of employees feel that they do have the authority to make decisions
    (Figure 7.4-1) and 72% feel they are encouraged to use innovative ways to improve
    things (Figure 7.4-2). These results may demonstrate Worknet's effectiveness in
    addressing workforce engagement and satisfaction.

o   A total of 90% of the workforce surveyed agrees with the statement "I Am a Valued
    Team Member" (Figure 7.4-4) and 82% agree that "What I Do Makes a Difference".
    These results may reflect Worknet's commitment to its principle success factor of
    Employee Focus.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   A total of 28% of the workforce surveyed disagree or strongly disagree that Worknet
    Provides "Training I Need" (Figure 7.4-3). A lack of appropriate training may limit
    Worknet from effectively addressing workforce capability as well as meeting its
    customer requirement of knowledgeable staff.

o   Results presented are not segmented by location or diversity of workforce. A lack of
    segmentation of results may keep Worknet from discerning opportunities for
    improvement specific to locations or segments of the workforce.

7.5   Process Effectiveness Outcomes

Strengths:

o   Worknet identified seven Key Work Processes in their response to Category 6 (Figure 6.2-1). Voucher Processing (Figure 7.3-3) has improved in PY07/08 over the prior four years performance.   For example, Worknet generated $3,200 in revenue in PY 04-05 and has improved to $7,800 in PY 07-08.

o   The percent of Dislocated Workers entering employment has increased from 81.2% in PY03/04 to 88.9% in PY06/07 and 89.47% in PY07/08 (Figure 7.5-2). Further, Worknet has surpassed the state standard in all five years presented. This may demonstrate its effectiveness in addressing its core value of "Results."

o   While the Rate of Adults Entering Employment for Worknet has steadily declined over the past three PY's, their rate has been consistently better than the WIA's in Fresno and Kern counties (Figure 7.5-8). Likewise, while the annual percentage of Displaced Workers entering employment in Merced has declined over the last 3 years, they have also out performed Fresno and Kern.

o   Dislocated Worker Job Retention returned to PY03/04, PY04/05, and PY05/06 levels in PY07/08 (91.01%), following an unexplained drop to 82.6% in PY06/07 (Figure 7.5-2). Adult Retention Success Rate has been greater in Merced than Fresno and Kern in 4 of the last 5 years (Figure 7.5-10).

o   Another measure of process effectiveness for Worknet is the Earnings Change and Average Wage for customers they place. While the change for Adults is down slightly in PY07/08 from PY06/07, both these years are above PY05/06's level (Figure 7.5-5). These results may demonstrate Worknet's effectiveness in placing job seekers in gainful employment.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   Worknet identified seven Key Work Processes in their response to Category 6 (Figure 6.2-1). One of these key processes is identified as "job matching", which would relate to candidates matched to available jobs. Although there was a slight increase in the percent of Adults entering employment from 85.1% in PH06/07 to 87.22% in PY07/08, these levels are below the high of 92.3% set in PY04/05 and 89.7% in PY05/06. Further, Adult Job Retention is down in PY07/08 to 85.83% from a high of 93.5% in PY04/05 and PY06/07's 89.0% (Figure 7.5-2). These declines make the extent of Worknet's success in job matching unclear.

o   Outcomes for DWs Retention Success Rates relative to the two comparative LWIAs are mixed. The applicant has the best performance in PY 03-04 and PY 05-06 but not PY 04-05 and PY 06-07, and experienced a decrease from 109.49% in PY 05-06 to 98.35%

in PY 06-07, which is below the State performance standard. Performance below the State standard may limit the organization from meeting its principle success factor of accountability.

o No process effectiveness outcomes related to the processes for business customers other than Vouchering process are presented, and no outcomes related to readiness for emergencies are presented. This may limit Worknet's ability to demonstrate that its processes effectively address the needs of the business customers, and that it is capable of immediate business resumption to continue services to its customers should an emergency occur.

7.6   Leadership Outcomes

Strengths:

o   Worknet has not had any Audit Exceptions for the county or state, Ethical Violations, EO violations, or Lawsuits/Litigation in the last 5 years (Figure 7.6-3). This may demonstrate the applicant's accountability for the tax dollars it is allocated as well as its core value of "Integrity."

o   Worknet had no Findings or Concerns with respect to EDD monitorings in PY07/08 (Figure 7.6-4) and only had one finding in PY 05-06, and one concern in PY 06-07. These results may demonstrate the effectiveness of its internal monitoring process and its ability to improve processes to ensure successful monitorings.

Opportunities for Improvement:

o   While it is noted that employees are involved in a variety of community activities, no organizational citizenship outcomes are presented. This may limit Worknet's ability to demonstrate its commitment to the community it serves.

o   Although results are presented showing all strategic goal and action plan targets have been met, no trends are presented. Without trends it may be difficult for Worknet to ascertain if it is sustaining a high level of performance.

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