

# Speaking Points about the Importance of a Skilled Workforce

For all WDC Members in Washington

**The Issue:**

The skills of our people will be the primary determinant of our future economic success.

**The Implication:**

Our top priority should be to coordinate and support our schools, colleges, and training and placement programs toward a common goal: building a highly skilled, highly adaptable workforce.

**The Reward:**

A dynamic economy, business profits, higher earnings for people, fewer people on public assistance, less poverty, and a stronger middle class base for our society.

**The Need:**

The public and our policy-leaders need to fully grasp this, or we risk our economic well-being. Nothing is more important to our economy than the skills our people.

**The Bottom Line:**

Our education, training and job placement system should be our state's top priority for funding and regulatory flexibility. In turn, the system is responsible for developing the skilled and adaptable workforce needed by our local economy, as defined by our local businesses.

**The Key Insight:**

The economy is the sum of each individual's talent and hard work. People create the economy. Skilled people create a strong economy.

**The Next Steps:**

We can have the best jobs in the global economy if we have the most skilled people in the global economy. We need to:

1. Make workforce development a top priority.
2. Allow greater local flexibility in the workforce development system.
3. Invest in workforce development.



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# Speaking Points About WDCs

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## What does a Workforce Development Council do?

In short, Workforce Development Councils make our local workforce more skilled and adaptable.

WDCs help coordinate the education, training and job placement system to meet the needs defined by local employers and local workers. To do this well, we need to consistently support our schools, colleges and training and placement programs in seeking additional funding, greater local flexibility and more efficient ways to use their existing funding.

## Why?

This gives our local companies a competitive edge in the global marketplace, and gives our people a competitive edge in the labor force. That means higher profits for business and higher earnings for people.

## How do we do it?

**We bring the right people together.** Making our local workforce more skilled and adaptable is a big job. It requires business and economic development leaders to work hand-in-hand with K-12, college, labor, and job placement professionals. WDCs coordinate these leaders, to provide a system that deliberately manages workforce development efforts based upon economic development principles established by the business and employer community.

**We work community-by-community.** We know that there is no single solution that works everywhere. Each local community must develop solutions that work for its unique local economy.

## Why should you help us succeed?

If we succeed, Washington's people will be some of the most talented, adaptable, and highly skilled workers in the world. That means long-term economic success, self-sufficient families, and a society that is built on a strong foundation—the skills and hard work of each individual.

## How can you help us succeed?

**Spread the word.** Tell your professional organizations, nonprofits, media, and decision-makers that our economic future depends on our success in building a highly talented workforce.

**Keep it local.** WDCs help local business and labor leaders give direct oversight to the education, training, and job placement system. That keeps the customer's voice strong, and it fosters locally-driven decision-making. Sometimes this is controversial, but when you support your local WDC, you support customer-driven, community-driven leadership.

**Fund it.** Our school system, colleges, and training and placement professionals will build—or fail to build—the skilled workers of tomorrow. And our skilled workers—or lack of skilled workers—will determine whether we lead or follow in the modern economy. Investing in the skills of our people is wise, especially when the educators and trainers are coordinating their efforts with business, labor, and economic development, via the local Workforce Development Council.

## Work with us.

Business profits, job creation, education, unemployment, poverty, and healthy communities are interconnected issues. If your organization addresses any of these issues, remember to highlight the need for skilled workers and effective Workforce Development Councils.



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