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Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas

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Introduction and Background

In late 2020, Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas (WSSET) commenced a strategic planning process leading to a four-year plan for the local workforce development area. As part of this planning process, WSSET partnered with The Odenthal Group to develop the written plan and facilitate several virtual conversations with targeted industries, and on specific employment and training topics. During these facilitated sessions, WSSET prioritized hearing from as many stakeholders, workforce partners, and board members as possible. Through this high level of participation, input, unique perspectives, and enthusiasm, WSSET has been able to create strategic plan goals that are truly reflective of the needs of the local workforce development area, its businesses, and its job-seekers.

This plan incorporates information gathered from the virtual strategic planning sessions. The results of this plan provide a strong focus on the future and being as proactive as possible to the changing job-market in Southeast Texas that has been affected so severely by the downturn in the petrochemical industry and the impact that downturn has had on several other industries reliant on the success of petrochemical companies.

The information gathered from this strategic planning process has produced two different reports:

- The Workforce Solutions of Southeast Texas Strategic Plan for 2021-2024
- Virtual Sessions and Survey Report

Through the process of gathering this information, reviewing the information gathered, and identifying common areas of defined importance, four strategic planning goals have been set:

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Strategic Planning Goals

- *Expand outreach and partnerships with employers through focused industry- and occupational-specific efforts to help identify the jobs of the future and bridge skills gaps among job-seekers.*
- *Increase collaboration and enhance alignment between economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to effectively meet the needs of employers and the communities we serve.*
- *Meet or exceed negotiated workforce performance goals for all programs to maximize community impact and identify areas of opportunity.*
- *Ensure all existing financial resources are utilized effectively while actively pursuing additional funding and partnership opportunities that will improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services.*

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas



Mission: *"Equip Southeast Texas with the skills and knowledge that meet the needs of employers to foster the region's economic growth."*

Vision: *"A world class, competitive workforce for Southeast Texas."*

Website: <https://setworks.org/>

The Southeast Texas Workforce Development Board, dba Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas (The Board) serves as the local workforce development board for a three-county region, including Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties. It is one of 28 local workforce development boards in Texas. The Board operates three American Job Centers (AJCs), serving approximately 12,500 job seekers and over 2,000 employers in 2019 when the area was experiencing low unemployment. These centers are in Beaumont, Orange, and Port Arthur. The primary function of the LWDB is to ensure that workforce funds and operations are invested in workforce development activities that address the needs of employers and job seekers in Southeast Texas.



Beaumont Workforce Solutions Office

The Board consists of approximately 25-30 members. Of these members, the majority are employers from the private sector who consistently provide input regarding the needs of employers. The Board also includes representatives from other entities, such as education, economic development, and other community-based organizations, which ensure that other workforce needs are also addressed regarding jobseekers and other targeted populations. Members are appointed by the Chief Elected Officials of the region with final approval by the Governor. The region's chief elected officials are the County Judges of Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange Counties, as well as the Mayor of Beaumont.



Port Arthur Workforce Solutions Office

The Board employs twelve staff who are responsible for program planning, monitoring, and reporting. The Board has oversight over job training programs funded under the Workforce Innovation and

Opportunity Act (WIOA), as well as other federal and state workforce programs.

The Board has established its vision of creating “A world class, competitive workforce for Southeast Texas.” To support this strong vision and prioritize strategic goals for success, the Board has worked diligently to seek out input and insight from employers, job-seekers, board members, economic developers, stakeholders, and other workforce partner organizations to help in the development of the goals and strategies associated with this plan. The Board has sought out the highest level of industry input during this process to find the next steps in fulfilling its vision of creating the most competitive workforce possible in Southeast Texas.



Orange Workforce Solutions Office

The Board’s mission is “to equip Southeast Texas with the skills and knowledge that meet the needs of employers to foster the region’s economic growth”. Emerging from a slight economic downturn due to the pandemic of 2020, the Board has established several goals and strategies in this plan that focus on continued economic growth to emerge from this downturn with revitalized energy, and to position itself primed to make the greatest impact possible.

A highly trained and skilled workforce is essential for economic success. The Board has engaged industry leaders to help identify skill deficiencies and gaps prevalent among job-seekers. As part of this process, the Board has actively engaged education and training leaders in the planning process to develop strategies to meet these skill gaps and increase direct linkages between industry needs and educational opportunities to meet those needs.

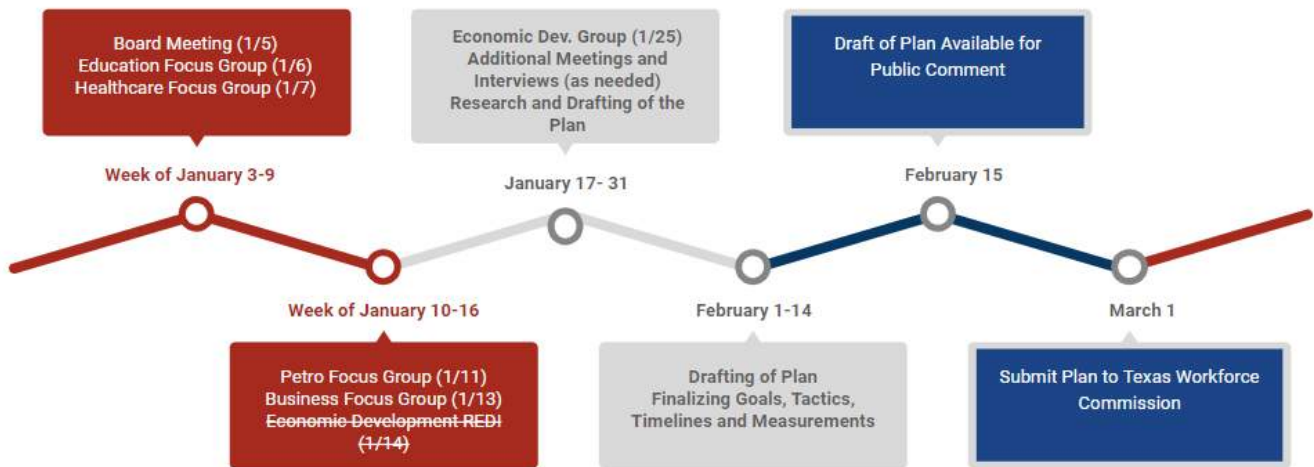
Process and Methodology

Timeline of Events

WSSET and The Odenthal Group worked closely together to develop a series of video conferencing events that would target specific industries and address specific topic areas deemed to be the most relevant for providing input in the strategic planning needs of WSSET. The focus group meetings were held between December 2020 and February 2021. Strategic planning goals were identified and board feedback was gathered during regularly scheduled meetings of the workforce development board, and the Planning, Evaluation, and Oversight Committee (PEOC).

The PEOC and the Board helped to outline the format, topics, and content for these focus group sessions. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, all topics were discussed by video conference in multiple sessions to accommodate the most partner and board feedback possible.

Strategic Planning Timeline of Events



The PEOC helped to establish the specific industries to be targeted during the strategic planning process. Initially, three primary industries were chosen, and meetings were scheduled for January 2021. Those industries included the following:

1. **Petrochemical Industry;**
2. **Healthcare Industry; and**
3. **Education.**

Each industry meeting was presented in three virtual sessions, each approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes in length. Individuals representing employers within these industries were asked to register for specific topics. The format of each session included brief introductions to the planning process, outlining the timeline involved in creating the strategic plan, and asking individuals attending the meeting to provide a brief introduction. Polling questions were utilized to gather instant feedback from participants on various subtopics related to the topic being discussed. Additionally, each session featured approximately 4-7 discussion questions.

Information and feedback were documented during these sessions through recording each session, note-taking, as well as polling results. Upon completion of these sessions, the information was presented to the WSSET leadership team and the workforce development board.

Two additional sessions were added to ensure feedback from other workforce and industry partners outside of the initial three chosen industries. These two topic sessions were decided upon after similar consultation between the strategic planner, the PEOC, and senior leadership at WSSET. The two sessions included

- 4. Business Focus Group (Generalized)**
- 5. Economic Development Focus Group**

The two additional sessions were presented similarly to the other three.

Goals, Tactics, and Timelines

The Board has developed goals that align with the Texas Workforce Commission's (TWC) statewide goals for workforce development. These goals also align with the Board's strategic vision to support regional economic growth and economic self-sufficiency.

Along with the strategic plan goals, the planning process also identified several tactics associated with each goal. In this section, the tactics for each defined goal are listed in a format that allows the board and its committees to continue to work on and measure progress towards these goals and tactics over the next four years. This framework is meant to be looked at, talked about, and continuously worked on throughout the next four years.

Strategic Planning Oversight Assignments			
Full Workforce Board	Planning, Evaluation and Oversight Committee	Youth Committee	Executive Committee
Marketing Committee	Workforce Solutions Staff	Bylaws Committee	Multiple Groups

Defined Goal	Tactics and Timelines	Outcomes and Measurements
Expand outreach and partnerships with employers through focused industry- and occupational-specific efforts to help identify the jobs of the future and bridge skills gaps among job-seekers.		
Planning	Seek out industry-specific input from industry leaders through a series of information-gathering sessions to help identify job needs of the present and future;	
Marketing	Continued usage of social media to reach potential employers and job-seekers;	
Full Board and Planning	Work to have a visible presence in all three counties (Hardin, Jefferson, and Orange) by collaborating with more organizations and employers;	
Planning	Utilize the best available data to help identify growing, in-demand, and shrinking occupations;	
Full Board	Find ways to make the latest labor market information and other relevant workforce data more readily available to employers;	
Planning	Develop more resources for job-seekers and employers that focus on soft skills;	
Staff	Expand the use of technology to reach more employers and job-seekers; <i>and</i>	

Staff	Continue to take advantage of opportunities to promote programs through highlighting success stories in the media and other outreach mechanisms.
Increase collaboration and enhance alignment between economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to effectively meet the needs of employers and the communities we serve.	
Planning and Youth	Seek out employer and job-seeker input to address gaps in service delivery at the workforce centers and to enhance opportunities for customers for education, training, or career/job placement;
Full Board	Build coalitions with training providers to ensure they are ready to meet the training needs of the future;
Full Board	Increase presence on advisory councils of training providers and keep the board informed of advisory council meeting results;
Youth	Build better partnerships with school administrators and counselors at the secondary level to promote the youth program and recruit new participants;
Youth	Continue to expand the Youth Expo and job fairs targeted at youth, continue virtual component year-round;
Staff	Improve the coordination of services with vocational rehabilitation;

Youth	Make the program elements for the youth program as “work-like” as possible to help build soft skills, industry knowledge, and financial literacy;
Full Board	Provide pathways for reintegration;
Youth	Providing services to the youth that fall between the gaps. Out of school youth, foster youth that age out of the system; <i>and</i>
Staff	Continue to expand outreach to veterans and their spouses through increased participation in the annual Red, White & You Hiring Event.
Meet or exceed negotiated workforce performance goals for all programs to maximize community impact and identify areas of opportunity.	
Staff	Conduct internal and external monitoring of WIOA programs to identify continuous improvement opportunities;
Planning	Have the Planning, Oversight, and Evaluation Committee regularly review WIOA performance during the Program Year; and
Bylaws and Executive	Review of existing committee structures of the board to improve efficiencies and increase participation.
Ensure all existing financial resources are utilized effectively while actively pursuing additional funding and partnership opportunities that will improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services.	

Staff	Continue to pursue federal discretionary grants and identify grant and funding opportunities at an accelerated rate to allow for the most time possible to develop proposals;
Staff	Build more relationships with foundations locally and nationally in pursuit of additional funding opportunities;
Full Board and Staff	Board members share their occupational and industry knowledge to help develop and promote programs, including with potential funding opportunities;
Full Board and Staff	Work closely with board members and other employers/partners to better identify their needs to create more realistic grant proposals;
Full Board	Strengthen relationships and collaboration with key stakeholders and partners to leverage resources to benefit our customers; <i>and</i>
Full Board	Board members will be active in reviewing the usage of funding and providing input/suggestions for areas of improvement.

Regional Economic and Employment Needs Analysis

Based on the 2019 population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau, our three-county (3) area of Southeast Texas had an estimated population of 392,663, an increase of 3,814 over the 2010 data. The largest county in our area is Jefferson County with an estimated population of 251,665 followed by Orange County, 83,396, and finally Hardin County with a population of 57,602. Two of the three counties within the region had population growth estimates in 2019 as compared to the 2010 Census. Hardin County grew by an estimated 5.4%, while Orange County's estimated growth rate was 1.9%. The only

county showing a negative growth rate during this period was Jefferson County with an estimated - 0.3% change.

Economic conditions for the WDA were adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and natural disasters, hurricanes Delta and Laura, which caused evacuations and business closures throughout the area. Many of the significant industrial and marine expansions, which were estimated at \$10 billion dollars, have been postponed. The postponement has also negatively affected employment projections and contributed to the increase in unemployment in Southeast Texas. The unemployment rate, June 2020, rose to 12.8 percent, more than 7 percent higher than the same time period in 2019. Additionally, Southeast Texas is home to the largest oil and gas refinery in North American. The worldwide decline in fuel prices exacerbated the employment outlook as the chemical manufacturing refiners and affiliated industries laid off workers due to a decline in product demand.

Despite the recent downturn in the oil and gas prices in combination with the current pandemic, plant managers and operators remain committed to future recovery and implementation of the planned expansions and construction. As the Southeast Texas economy recovers, construction and manufacturing employment opportunities are also on the increase. The Education and Healthcare industry, which struggled with pandemic-related downturns due to local and federal restrictions, is still the second largest industry sector in Southeast Texas, with 22.9 percent of employment in the area. The Trade, Transportation, and Utility industry rounds out the top three employment by industry sectors with 21.0 percent.

Occupations in the following industry sectors in Southeast Texas are projected as emerging or in-demand and reflect expanded employment opportunities for job seekers:

- Individuals and family services
- Outpatient care centers
- Management and technical consulting services
- Residential building construction
- Ship and boat building
- Utility system construction
- Electronic and appliance stores
- Offices of health practitioners
- Commercial machinery repair and maintenance

The workforce board remains committed to providing opportunities for job seekers to gain and improve skills, secure industry-recognized credentials, through virtual and in-class hybrid courses, on-the-job-training and apprenticeships, to meet business manpower needs.

Knowledge and Skills Analysis

As part of the strategic planning process for this local plan, the Board attempted to reenergize its sector partnership efforts by engaging in specialized focus groups among specific sectors. The Board brought in an outside facilitator to help with these meetings and conducted meetings with Education, Petrochemical, and Healthcare employer groups. The Board has established a goal to continue to engage employers from targeted sectors throughout the duration of this plan to create better partnerships across industry, education, workforce, and economic development.

The Board, realizing the necessity to connect to businesses, job-seekers, training providers, and local communities throughout the pandemic, developed new, innovative service delivery methods, incorporating virtual access to workforce all offerings. Employers can post employment opportunities, 24/7, to WorkInTexas.com, at no-cost, participate in virtual job fairs and customized hiring events with workforce staff assistance. Job seekers can attend required orientations and workshops, participate in on-line education enrichment courses, and work with career specialists, in a virtual, one-to-one environment. Labor Market and Career Information are available on the Board's website in addition to specific, local employment data, including wages, employment trends, and job training and education requirements.

While historically the three largest industries in our area have consisted of the construction industry, the health services industry, and the manufacturing industry, our area has seen the emergence of the food service, and the educational sectors. The growth of the accommodation and food services is primarily a result of industry strength and expansions, as well as the disasters such as hurricanes, that bring workers from outside our area.

Sector	2018 Average	2028 Projections	Number Change	Percent Change
Manufacturing	21,737	22,310	573	2.6
Health Care and Social Assistance	19,884	20,965	1,081	5.4
Construction	18,786	20,617	1,831	9.7
Accommodation and Food Services	15,286	16,448	1,162	7.6
Educational Services	13,765	13,946	181	1.3

The strong projected growth rates of Construction (9.7%), Accommodation and Food Service (7.6%), and Health Care and Social Assistance (5.4%) should lead to many opportunities to better connect job-seekers with employers hiring in these fields. However, these employment connections will come with challenges. As healthcare occupations continue to grow at an accelerated rate, so does the need to train high-quality practitioners quickly and effectively. Educational providers are challenged to meet the demands of the major employers of healthcare practitioners who need specialized practitioners. There is a shortage of clinical locations which limits training opportunities. The 2020 pandemic has added to that challenge, but in the long run, may prove to create more awareness of healthcare occupations and perhaps increase the number of students entering training programs in this sector.

The economic challenges posed by oil prices, disasters, and the 2020 pandemic, have also left questions about the projected growth for jobs in the construction field, as many projects slowed down or came to a standstill. The long-term effects on the Accommodation and Food Services sector have yet to be fully realized, but economic development specialists in our area remain optimistic that we will continue to see the projected growth in due time.

During the strategic planning process, the Board held informational listening sessions with business leaders. Specific sessions were held that focused on the issues facing the petrochemical businesses, health care occupations, and in addressing the connections with education training providers. A more generalized listening business and economic development sessions were also held. As these business leaders came together to help orient the Board on the priorities for this plan, several things were noted:

- The petrochemical industry feeds into so many more industry sectors. When things are going well, it can foster immense and rapid growth in the construction, retail, hospitality, and retail, and hospitality industries. Similarly, when there is a downturn in petrochemical, these connected industries suffer.
- Sufficient workforce housing continues to be an issue in certain areas we serve, especially when the petrochemical industry is booming.
- The ports are playing a bigger role and offer great opportunities to connect individuals with high-paying careers. These positions are becoming more openly available for the general public and there are great opportunities to create more awareness of these jobs.
- The demand for healthcare workers continues to skyrocket upward. Training providers are seeing a higher demand in students interested in these occupations, but hospitals and other employers of healthcare workers are struggling to find enough trained workers.
- The Board continues to connect well with education and training providers within the communities we serve. The leadership at public school districts is actively engaged in

conversations about workforce development and has created many new programs to provide career learning opportunities for middle and high school students.

- The two- and four-year colleges in our service area are also actively engaged in the conversations about workforce development. The Board has drawn upon the expertise of leaders from higher education to best address the training needs of the individuals it serves.

Finding candidates that can pass background checks is another challenge facing many of our major sectors. Many employers in the construction, healthcare, and manufacturing sectors have very strict regulations relating to criminal offenses, and frequently drug test their employees. A concern consistently raised by many in the construction and manufacturing industries, especially among petrochemical companies, is that many potential employees are unable to pass mandatory drug tests, or other background screening to make it past the initial interview.

Close partnerships with educational institutions are a necessity for the Board to meet the high skill demands of many growing occupations. The Board has established goals related to being more active on educational advisory councils and seeking out better partnerships with all levels of education. As healthcare and education occupations continue to grow, the demand for highly skilled and highly educated workers grows as well.

Most jobs in identified in-demand industries are heavily skills-based. Important skills in the construction and manufacturing industries include a high school diploma or equivalent (GED), ability to read, write and understand English, basic math comprehension, basic computer skills, ability to plan work independently, work 12-hour rotating shifts often outside conditions. Refineries in our area often require two to three years of experience in addition to a certificate or degree (Associates) to be considered for employment.

Employers in industry and manufacturing also consider having a commercial drivers' license (CDL), National Center of Construction Education and Research (NCCER) or National Commission for the Certification of Crane Operators (NCCCO) credentials, and being English/Spanish bilingual, an advantage when applying for in-demand occupations. Skills in the health services industry include strong soft skills, such as providing effective and sympathetic customer service to patients, and job-specific medical licenses and certifications including cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and basic life support (BLS). As mentioned, specialization among healthcare practitioners is becoming more and more important and valuable. This is adding to a difficult dynamic where individuals gaining an early specialization in their career can leverage that specialization for a better job offer elsewhere.

Labor Force Analysis and Trends

The unemployment rate in our three-county area has historically trended similarly with the fluctuation at the state and national levels. Based upon our Petrochemical industry makeup (downstream operations), our region was significantly impacted by the recent downturn in oil and gas prices. In 2019,

unemployment was around five-percent, however, there are pockets of the WDA that experience structural unemployment issues, due to a mismatch of supply and demand. Like many areas that experience structural unemployment issues, a mismatch between the skill set of the local workforce versus the skill set needed exists here in Southeast Texas.



Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Utilizing data from TWC's UI Claimant Dashboard (as of 2/11/2021), our workforce area has the 12th highest number of current Unemployment Insurance claims among the 28 workforce areas in Texas with 4,121 claimants. The top five industries for claimants from the area were:

1. Oil and gas pipeline construction
2. All other nonresidential trade contractors
3. Limited-service restaurants
4. Industrial building construction
5. Full-service restaurants

Finalized year-end data from 2019 shows county-level unemployment rates of 4.6% in Harding, 5.8% in Jefferson, and 5.2% in Orange. However, looking at the month-to-month estimated unemployment rates indicates that between the end of 2019 through the present, there has been a significant increase in unemployment rates due to the economic effects of the pandemic. The estimated unemployment rate for the entire workforce development area 11.0% for December 2020, compared to 7.1% in all of Texas, and 6.5% nationwide.

Labor Force in the Local Area				
	Dec-20	Nov-20	Dec-19	Yearly Change
Civilian Labor Force	167,200	168,384	168,870	-1670
Employed	148,729	148,419	159,649	-10920
Unemployed	184,71	19,965	9,221	9250
Unemployment Rate	11	11.9	5.5	5.5

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

Average Weekly Wage (2nd Quarter 2020) for the Local Area					
	Q2 2020	Q1 2020	Q2 2019	Quarterly Change	Yearly Change
WDA	\$1,076	\$1,115	\$1,039	\$-39	\$37
Texas	\$1,156	\$1,231	\$1,101	\$-75	\$55
U.S.	\$1,188	\$1,222	\$1,094	\$-34	\$94

Source: Texas Workforce Commission, Labor Market and Career Information

The average weekly wage data in the chart above compares our local workforce area to the rest of Texas and to the United States (as a whole). The chart represents average gross wages for a weekly period of individuals who are employed. This chart helps to provide an indicator of how wages overall compare in our local area to the rest of the state or country. As illustrated, wages are not too far below state or national averages. However, the data also indicates that wages are up slightly (\$37) for the local workforce area in the year-to-year comparison, but down (\$39) in the quarter-to-quarter comparison. In both comparisons, the trend up yearly and the trend down yearly less than those same trends at the state and national levels. It's hard to make any conclusive statements about the state of our economy from this one-year lookback at average wages, but as we track these over a longer period of time, there may be more noticeable indicators of the economic direction of our local economy.

According to 2019 data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, an estimated 13.6% of individuals in Texas live in poverty, including 19.2% of children ages 0-17. For our local area those numbers are slightly higher in most counties with Hardin at 12.1% and 16.2%, Jefferson at 16.9% and 24.4%, and Orange at 12.5% and 18.7%.

According to 2014-2018 estimated data pulled from JobsEQ and based on the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey, our workforce development area has a lower rate of highly educated individuals than compared to Texas as a whole or to the nation. Individuals holding a bachelor's degree account for 13.0% of the population in the area compared to 20.0% statewide and 20.8% nationwide. Similarly, for education beyond a bachelor's degree that includes a postgraduate degree, the number for our area is 5.0% compared to 10.0% statewide, and 12.1% nationwide. Our area is ahead of the rest of Texas in the area of associate degrees at 9.0% compared to 7.5% in Texas and 9.1% nationwide. The higher percentage of associate degree holders can be attributed to strong connections with community colleges in our three-county area and the historical requirement for an associate degree being a needed steppingstone requirement for entry into many petrochemical and healthcare jobs.

The same datasets indicate that our area has very high percentages of individuals completing some college, but with no degree, as well as individuals completing a high school diploma. For individuals completing some college, the numbers show 25.2% in this category for our area, compared to 22.1% statewide and 21.0% nationwide. Similarly, for individuals with only a high school diploma, our area shows 34.4% of the population in this category compared to 24.7% in Texas and 25.8% nationwide. Our area also has a lower percentage of individuals with no high school diploma (13.5%) as compared to Texas as a whole (15.7%).

Based on the education data captured for our area, the Board will have many opportunities to develop programs that connect with individuals who have completed high school or have taken some college courses, but who have not completed degrees. There is a real opportunity to capitalize on the existing skill sets and educational base of these individuals to develop accelerated educational pathways to success for many of our targeted occupations.

In Texas, 8.2 percent of people are living with a disability. The percentages are higher throughout our three-county region with 9.9 percent in Jefferson County, 13.4 percent in Orange County, and 11.8 percent in Hardin County.

The Board, and its contractor as well as other service agencies continue to work together to address barriers through evaluation of needs and cross-referrals where appropriate. The Board uses many resources for serving individuals with barriers to employment, especially those with disabilities. Our partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation Services is critical toward increasing the pool of qualified skilled workers.

In our workforce centers assistive devices to help customers with disabilities access job search resource are available such as:

- Large monitors
- Accessible workstations
- Screen magnifier software

- Screen reader software
- Automatic door openers

The Board makes all reasonable steps to ensure that persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have meaningful access and equal opportunities to participate in our services, activities, programs, and other benefits.

Workforce Development Analysis

The Southeast Texas Workforce area has close partnerships with three two-year post-secondary institutions located in Orange and Jefferson Counties with a satellite campus in Hardin County. As indicated in the previous section our area boasts higher than average numbers of individuals completing associate degree programs. This due to the successful programs and placement efforts of these two-year post-secondary institutions. Our two-year institutions are primary providers of workforce training and all have programs on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), with many of our targeted and in-demand occupations requiring only a two-year degree or specialized training equivalent to this amount of time.

There are additional training providers that also help support programs from our targeted and in-demand occupational lists, as well as offering programs that have been approved and vetted for the ETPL. The Southeast Texas Workforce Board works collaboratively with Region 5 Education Service Center and local districts' Career and Technology Departments to advise on targeted occupations and seek alignment where possible. We believe that it is important to engage education providers in active dialogue related to the program needs of both businesses and job-seekers. Many of our private sector board members are active members of educational advisory committees of the local colleges, and many play an active role in helping to develop educational supports at the secondary education level as well.

There are three Early College High School campuses located in our workforce area: Beaumont, Port Arthur, and Silsbee. As part of our strategic planning process that was started at the end of 2020, the board has engaged secondary and post-secondary educational institutions and organizations in direct conversations related to improving our ability as a Board and local workforce area to collaborate even better with these organizations. Surveying, active polling questions, and facilitated dialogue were all part of this process to better engage educational institutions. These conversations were a two-way street where we also sought out input to find ways our workforce centers could improve our relationship with these organizations and better support them in their goals of supporting student success. Many of our goals from this strategic plan are education- and community-focused.

An analysis of the training concentration for Southeast Texas indicates when looking at occupations where 75% or more in the occupation have "some college or above", our area exceeds degree production when compared to national averages in the areas of Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations, Management Occupations, Protective Services Occupations, Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations, and Personal Care and Service Occupations.

Presentations from Meetings

Planning Evaluation and Oversight Committee - 12/03/2020

Presentation Slides

[illegible]

Workforce Board Planning Session - 12/08/2020

Today's Agenda -

- My Background
- The Structure of the Plan
- Survey Results (20 responses)
- Setting Conversation Topics
- Starting to Develop Goals



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Education Focus Group - 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 28
Register: [http://ezweb.org.uk/viewmeeting.asp?MeetingID=60&ViewDate=&EventNo=7995_7](#)

Healthcare Focus Group - 1 p.m., Thursday, January 28
Register: [http://ezweb.org.uk/viewmeeting.asp?MeetingID=60&ViewDate=&EventNo=7996_7](#)

Pets Focus Group - 1 p.m., Monday, January 19th
Register: [http://ezweb.org.uk/viewmeeting.asp?MeetingID=60&ViewDate=&EventNo=7997_7](#)

Business Focus Group - 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 13th
Register: [http://ezweb.org.uk/viewmeeting.asp?MeetingID=60&ViewDate=&EventNo=7998_7](#)

Economic Development Focus Groups (RED meetings) - 10.30 a.m., Thursday, January 14th

- What are the most critical jobs you are hiring for now and do you expect that to change in the next 5 or 10 years?
- What is the biggest challenge in hiring new employees?
- What are some of the biggest skills gaps that you are seeing in prospective employees?
- Are job-seekers ready to meet the requirements of the jobs of the future, and if not, how do you see better job-seekers meeting the demands of the future?
- How can connections between employers and the workforce continue to improve?
- How do we enhance career awareness/interest in the occupations that are the most in-demand?
- What are the training needs you have for existing employees and what are you doing to meet those needs?

Are there any questions that are missing or that you would want to ask?

Board Survey Results will Drive the Conversation Topics

-

Business Unit	Business Unit	Business Unit
Business Unit	Business Unit	Business Unit

Example from Workforce Alliance of South Central Kansas

Downloaded from <http://ajph.org/> at University of California, San Diego on June 11, 2015

© 2006 Blackwell Publishing Ltd, *Journal of Internal Medicine* 260: 105–112

Downloaded from <http://ajphaphysocpharm.sagepub.com/> at 11:50 11 November 2014

Downloaded from <http://ajphaphysocpharm.sagepub.com> at National Archive Publishing Co on June 11, 2015

Healthcare Focus Group - 1/7/2021

Presentation Slides

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Healthcare Focus Group
1/7/2021

<https://workforce21.org/strategic-plan-and-report/>

www.wstx.com




Virtual Focus Group Sessions

Format for Each Virtual Session:

- Each session is scheduled for 90 minutes.
- There will be a combination of conversation topics and polling questions.
- The number of participants will be limited for each session to help facilitate good conversations.
- Focus areas have been defined for each session.
- Setting Strategies and Goals:
 - Strategies and Goals (15 minutes)
 - Level of Impact (What should we do?)
 - Best Chance for Success
 - Level of Difficulty
 - Measures and Timelines (How are we going to do it?)
 - Measuring Success



Polling Questions and Conversation Topic (#1)

Conversation Topic/Question:

What are the most critical healthcare jobs you are hiring for now and do you expect that to change in the next 5 or 10 years?

Polling Questions:

- Industry Experience
- Board Membership
- Job Growth

Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#2)

Conversation Topic/Question:

What is the biggest challenge in hiring new employees?

What are some of the biggest skills gaps that you are seeing in prospective employees?

Polling Questions:

- Challenges of Finding New Employees

Conversation Topic and Polling Questions (#3)

Conversation Topic/Question:

Are job-seekers ready to meet the requirements of the jobs of the future, and if not, how do we develop better job skills training to meet the demands of the future?

Polling Questions:

- Schools and Training Providers
- Educational Input

Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#4)

Conversation Topic/Question:

How can connections between employers and the workforce centers be improved?

How do we enhance career awareness/interest in healthcare occupations?

Polling Questions:

- Workforce Centers

Conversation Topic (#5)

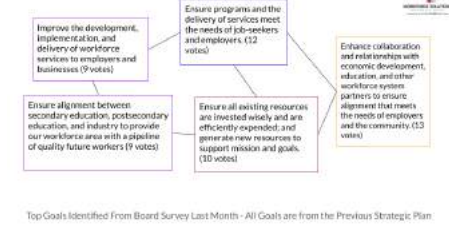
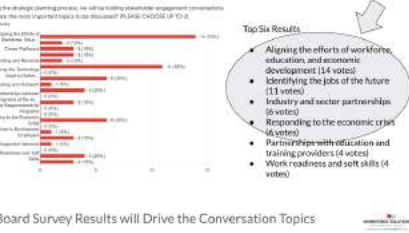
Conversation Topic/Question:

What are the training needs you have for existing employees and what are you doing to meet those needs?

Polling Questions:

From our conversation today, what stands out in your mind the most?

Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Process



Virtual Sessions Education Focus Group – 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 30: Register: https://cf2web.zoom.us/joining/register?from=addon&source=edu&id=4uGwYg_WW5_7 Healthcare Focus Group – 1 p.m., Thursday, January 30: Register: https://cf2web.zoom.us/joining/register?from=addon&source=hlt&id=qvqkDfXpMjLlshocxNwZTtUJ Pets Focus Group – 1 p.m., Monday, January 30: Register: https://cf2web.zoom.us/joining/register?from=addon&source=pets&id=9pHnTAAXQzTvucmndnKCO Business Focus Group – 3 p.m., Wednesday, January 30: Register: https://cf2web.zoom.us/joining/register?from=addon&source=biz&id=GyPhL_GdE_Le Economic Development Focus Group (RED meeting) – 11:30 a.m., Thursday, January 30: 		Any Questions, Suggestions, or other Feedback?
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Petrochemical Focus Group - 1/11/2021

Presentation Slides

Presentation Slides

Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Petrochemical Focus Group
1/11/2021

<https://networks.org/strategic-plan-and-meets/>

www.idemthefocus.com

Strategic Planning Timeline of Events

Week of January 5-9: Submitting proposals to the Workforce Solutions (Jan 5-9)

Week of January 12-16: Submitting proposals to the Workforce Solutions (Jan 12-16)

Week of January 19-23: Submitting proposals to the Workforce Solutions (Jan 19-23)

Week of January 26-30: Submitting proposals to the Workforce Solutions (Jan 26-30)

Virtual Focus Group Sessions

Impact

Ease

Format for Each Virtual Session:

- Each session is scheduled for 90 minutes.
- There will be a combination of conversation topics and polling questions.
- The number of participants will be limited for each session to help facilitate good conversations.
- Focus areas have been defined for each session.
- Setting Strategies and Goals:**
 - Strategies and Goals (What can we do?)
 - Level of Impact (What should we do?)
 - Best Chance for Success
 - Level of Difficulty
 - Influences and Timeline (How are we going to do it?)
 - Measuring Success

Polling Questions and Conversation Topic (#1)

Conversation Topic/Question:
What are the most critical jobs you are hiring for now, and do you expect that to change in the next 5 or 10 years?

Polling Questions:
1. Industry Experience
2. Board Membership
3. Job Growth

Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#2)

Conversation Topic/Question:
What is the biggest challenge in hiring new employees?
What are some of the biggest skills gaps that you are seeing in prospective employees?

Polling Questions:
1. Challenges of Finding/How Employees

Conversation Topic and Polling Questions (#3)

Conversation Topic/Question:
Are job-seekers ready to meet the requirements of the jobs of the future, and if not, how do we develop better job skills training to meet the demands of the future?

Polling Questions:
1. Schools and Training Providers
2. Educational Input

Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#4)

Conversation Topic/Question:
How can connections between employers and the workforce centers be improved?
How do we enhance career awareness/interest in petrochemical occupations?

Polling Questions:
1. Workforce Centers

Conversation Topic (#5)

Conversation Topic/Question:
What are the training needs you have for existing employees and what are you doing to meet those needs?

Polling Questions:

From our conversation today, what stands out in your mind the most?

Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Process

Category	Score	Total Votes
Aligning the efforts of workforce, education, and economic development (14 votes)	14	14
Identifying the jobs of the future (11 votes)	11	11
Industry and sector partnerships (6 votes)	6	6
Responding to the economic crisis (4 votes)	4	4
Partnerships with education and training providers (4 votes)	4	4
Work readiness and soft skills (4 votes)	4	4

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graph TD
    A[Improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services to employers and businesses (9 votes)] --> B[Ensure programs and the delivery of services meet the needs of job-seekers and employers (12 votes)]
    A --> C[Enhance collaboration and relationships with economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to ensure alignment that meets the needs of employers and the community (13 votes)]
    B --> D[Ensure alignment between secondary education, postsecondary education, and industry to provide our new learners with a pipeline of quality future workers (9 votes)]
    C --> E[Ensure all existing resources are invested wisely and are efficiently expended and generate new resources to support mission and goals (10 votes)]
    
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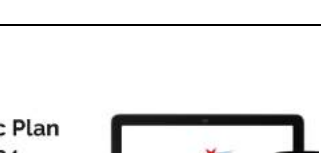
Board Survey Results will Drive the Conversation Topics

Top Goals Identified From Board Survey Last Month - All Goals are from the Previous Strategic Plan

Virtual Sessions

Business Focus Group 1/13/2021

Presentation Slides



Strategic Plan 2021-2024

Business Focus Group
1/13/2021

<https://networks.org/strategic-plan-and-report/>
www.oakribthelgroup.com

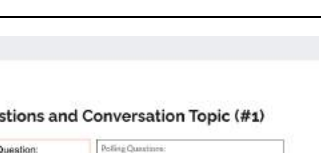


Strategic Planning Timeline of Events

Work of January 13th
Board Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)

Work of January 13th
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)

Work of January 13th
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)
Strategic Planning Committee Meeting (1.13)



Virtual Focus Group Sessions

Format for Each Virtual Session:

- Each session is scheduled for 90 minutes.
- There will be a combination of conversation topics and polling questions.
- The number of participants will be limited for each session to help facilitate good conversations.
- Focus areas have been defined for each session.
- Setting Strategies and Goals
- Measuring Success



Polling Questions and Conversation Topic (#1)

Conversation Topic/Question:
What are the most critical jobs you are hiring for now, and do you expect that to change in the next 5 or 10 years?

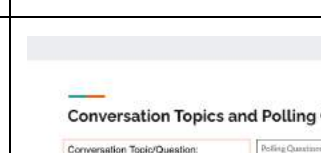
Polling Questions:
1. Industry Experience
2. Board Membership
3. Job/Growth



Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#2)

Conversation Topic/Question:
What is the biggest challenge in hiring new employees?

Polling Questions:
1. Challenges of Finding New Employees



Conversation Topic and Polling Questions (#3)

Conversation Topic/Question:
Are job-seekers ready to meet the requirements of the jobs of the future, and if not, how do we develop better job skills training to meet the demands of the future?

Polling Questions:
1. Schools and Training Providers
2. Educational Input

Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#4)

Conversation Topic/Question:

How can connections between employers and the workforce centers be improved?

How do we enhance career awareness and interest in the occupations that are growing?

Polling Questions:

1. Workforce Centers

Conversation Topic (#5)

Conversation Topic/Question:

What are the training needs you have for existing employees and what are you doing to meet those needs?

Polling Questions:

From our conversation today, what stands out in your mind the most?

Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Process

Using the strategic planning process, we will be holding stakeholder engagement conversations. What are the most important topics to be discussed? PLEASE CHOOSE UP TO 3.

Topic	Count	Percentage
Aligning the efforts of workforce education, and economic development	14	31.1%
Identifying the jobs of the future	11	24.4%
Industry and sector partnerships	8	17.8%
Responding to the economic crisis	6	13.3%
Partnering with education and training providers	4	8.9%
Work readiness and soft skills	4	8.9%

Top Six Results

- Aligning the efforts of workforce education, and economic development (14 votes)
- Identifying the jobs of the future (11 votes)
- Industry and sector partnerships (8 votes)
- Responding to the economic crisis (6 votes)
- Partnering with education and training providers (4 votes)
- Work readiness and soft skills (4 votes)

Board Survey Results will Drive the Conversation Topics

- Improve the development, implementation, and delivery of workforce services to employers and businesses (9 votes)
- Ensure programs and the delivery of services meet the needs of job-seekers and employers (12 votes)
- Enhance collaboration and relationships with economic development, education, and other workforce system partners to ensure alignment that meets the needs of employers and the community (13 votes)
- Ensure alignment between secondary education, postsecondary education, and industry to provide our workforce area with a pipeline of quality future workers (9 votes)
- Ensure all existing resources are invested wisely and are efficiently expended and generate new resources to support mission and goals (10 votes)

Top Goals Identified From Board Survey Last Months - All Goals are from the Previous Strategic Plan

Virtual Sessions

Education Focus Group - 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 30
Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/zoomurl/2021/01/30/20210130-0900-EDUCATION>

Healthcare Focus Group - 1 p.m., Thursday, January 31
Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/zoomurl/2021/01/31/20210131-1300-HEALTHCARE>

Auto Focus Group - 1 p.m., Monday, January 15th
Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/zoomurl/2021/01/15/20210115-1300-AUTO>

Business Focus Group - 9 a.m., Wednesday, January 13th
Register: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/zoomurl/2021/01/13/20210113-0900-BUSINESS>

Economic Development Focus Group (REDI meeting) - 11:30 a.m., Thursday, January 14th

Any Questions, Suggestions, or other Feedback?

Economic Development Focus Group - 1/25/2021

Presentation Slides

Presentation Slides

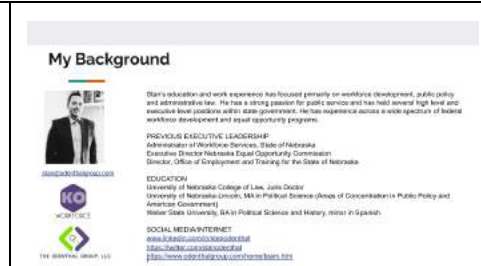


**Strategic Plan
2021-2024**

Economic Development Focus Group
1/25/2021

<https://networksolutions.com/strategic-plan-and-report/>

www.econtribalsgroup.com



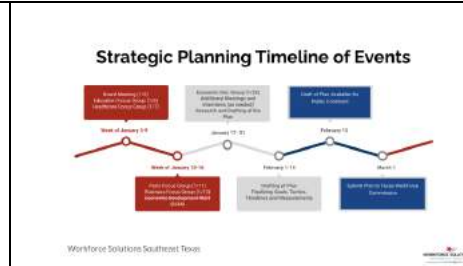
My Background

Start's education and work experience has focused primarily on workforce development, public policy and administrative law. He has a strong passion for public service and has held several high level and executive level positions within state government. He has experience across a wide spectrum of federal workforce development and equal opportunity programs.

PREVIOUS EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP
 Administrator of Workforce Services, State of Nebraska
 Executive Director Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission
 Director, Office of Employment and Training for the State of Nebraska

EDUCATION
 University of Nebraska College of Law, J.D. and Doctor
 University of Nebraska-Lincoln, M.A. in Public Science (Focus of Concentration Public Policy and American Government)
 Weber State University, B.A. in Political Science and History minor in Spanish

SOCIAL MEDIA/INTERNET
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/stevebaldwin/>
<https://twitter.com/stevebaldwin1>
<https://www.facebook.com/stevebaldwin1>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvme8t8m8>

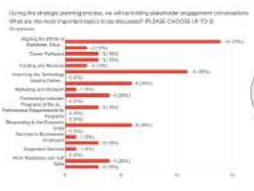


Strategic Planning Timeline of Events

Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas

Timeline of Events:

- Event 1: Board Meeting (1/25/21) - Network Solutions SE Texas Strategic Planning and Economic Development Focus Group
- Event 2: Board Meeting (2/12/21) - Economic Development Focus Group
- Event 3: Board Meeting (3/1/21) - Economic Development Focus Group
- Event 4: Board Meeting (3/1/21) - Economic Development Focus Group
- Event 5: Board Meeting (3/1/21) - Economic Development Focus Group
- Event 6: Board Meeting (3/1/21) - Economic Development Focus Group
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- Event 100: Board Meeting (3/1/21) - Economic Development Focus Group

Virtual Focus Group Sessions  Format for Each Virtual Session: - Each session is scheduled for 90 minutes. - There will be a combination of conversation topics and polling questions. - The number of participants will be limited for each session to help facilitate good conversations. - Focus areas have been defined for each session. - Setting Strategies and Goals: - Strategies and Goals (What can we do?) - Level of Impact (What should we do?) - Best Chance for Success - Level of Difficulty - Resources and Timeline (How are we going to do it?) - Measuring Success	Polling Questions and Conversation Topic (#1) Conversation Topic/Question: What are some of the biggest challenges businesses are currently facing and how are they addressing those challenges? Polling Questions: - Job Growth - On a scale of 1-5, how much do you wish to grow your organization or the organization you represent, growing over the next five years? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest)	Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#2) Conversation Topic/Question: How can connections between businesses and the workforce centers be improved? What opportunities are there for the workforce centers to better connect with small businesses and emerging entrepreneurs? Polling Questions: - Workforce Centers - How well do the workforce centers help your organization to recruit new and trained? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest)		
Conversation Topics and Polling Question (#3) Conversation Topic/Question: How can education, economic development, and workforce development better collaborate? Polling Questions: - Education, Economic Development, Workforce Development - On a scale of 1-5, how well do you think the collaboration between workforce development, education, and economic development within your organization? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest) - Schools and Training Providers - On a scale of 1-5, how effective are training providers and schools in meeting the needs of your business to gain new and well-trained employees? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest) - Educational Input - On a scale of 1-5, how well do education or training providers seek out your organization input and expertise in developing relevant training programs or refining existing programs? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest)	Conversation Topic and Polling Questions (#4) Conversation Topic/Question: What are the most critical jobs in your community in the next five years? How is your community addressing workforce housing issues? Polling Questions: - Community Workforce - On a scale of 1-5, how important is the workforce in your community to meet the community's needs in the next five years? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest) - Workforce Housing - On a scale of 1-5, how important is it for your community's current ability to meet the housing needs of individuals working within the community? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest)	Conversation Topics (#5) Conversation Topic/Question: Are job-seekers ready to meet the requirements of the jobs of the future, and if not, how do we develop better job skills training to meet the demands of the future? Polling Questions: - Challenges of Finding New Employees - On a scale of 1-5, how challenging is it to find employees that you need? (Scored 1 ——— 5 ——— 5 highest)		
Conversation Topics (#6) Conversation Topic/Question: How do we enhance career awareness/interest in the occupations that are the most in-demand? Polling Questions:	From our conversation today, what stands out in your mind the most?		Next Steps in the Strategic Planning Process	
During the strategic planning process, we will be holding stakeholder engagement conversations. What are the most important topics to be discussed? PLEASE CHOOSE UP TO 3 responses.  Board Survey Results will Drive the Conversation Topics	Top Six Results: - Aligning the efforts of workforce, education, and economic development (14 votes) - Identifying the jobs of the future (11 votes) - Industry and sector partnerships (6 votes) - Responding to the economic crisis (4 votes) - Partnerships with education and training providers (4 votes) - Work readiness and soft skills (4 votes)	Any Questions, Suggestions, or other Feedback?		

About the Strategic Planning Facilitator



THE ODENTHAL GROUP, LLC

Strategy, Talent, and Technology Solutions for Workforce and Economic Development

Website: www.odenthalgroup.com

Email: stan@odenthalgroup.com

The Odenthal Group is building talent solutions to enhance how workforce development and economic development activities are implemented at the local, state, and national levels. We offer strategic planning services, program evaluation, technical writing, and customized training programs for local workforce boards and economic development groups.

The Odenthal Group was formed in July 2019 by Stan Odenthal. Stan has over a decade of state government experience, including previously holding two executive-level positions with state government agencies. Before starting the Odenthal Group, Stan was the Director of the Office of Employment and Training with the Nebraska Department of Labor. He was also previously the Executive Director for the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission.



Stan Odenthal

Stan has extensive experience in bringing together and skillfully facilitating collaborative projects amongst multiple stakeholders, including government agencies, secondary schools, institutions of higher education, local governments, chambers of commerce, and individual businesses for a common purpose to move things forward. Stan holds a J.D. from the University of Nebraska College of Law, an M.A. in Political Science from the University of Nebraska Lincoln, and a B.A. in History and Political Science from Weber State University.



The Odenthal Group has a team of partnering consultants with extensive experience and high-level knowledge in the areas of workforce development, education, information technology, and economic development. Additionally, the Odenthal Group owns and operates workforceKO (www.workforceKO.com), a website that offers on-demand classes, and connects workforce and economic development groups with the resources, news, and training tools they need to have a bigger impact in the work

they do daily.



Full Mind Map

