

Center of Workforce Excellence Application Guide - Addendum #1

08/14/20

The information below is provided as clarification and update to the originally published Center of Workforce Excellence Application Guide. These guidelines should be used as an additive to the original document to prepare an application and/or to respond to a previously submitted application.

Collaboration

Collaboration is essential to be approved as a Center of Workforce Excellence. Collaboration will ensure that all available resources are leveraged for the system. Each applicant must ensure that stakeholders within the area to be served are active members of the process. Stakeholders should include business representatives, education institutions, state agencies, community organizations, tribal governments and industry related organizations. Please see the chart on page 1 for a list of potential partners. Please provide strong evidence that the system being proposed is inclusive of these stakeholders.

Industry Sector Focus

The new “Oklahoma Works Together” workforce plan recognizes the rural nature of the state of Oklahoma and understands that flexibility is key for the Center of Excellence process to ensure local needs are met. The plan will allow for two types of applications. One which is specific to a chosen Industry sector and one that is more general, serving multiple sector within the workforce area.

Industry Specific Workforce Centers of Excellence: it is expected that each application for an Industry Specific Center of Excellence clearly identifies primary industry sectors which will be the focus of its efforts. The sector(s) should represent the ecosystem of the workforce system to be served. The application can cater to sub-sectors if evidence is provided that the needs can be effectively met.

Workforce Development Centers of Excellence: many communities across Oklahoma do not have high concentration of specific industry clusters to focus their efforts and require flexibility to be broader in their approach. Applications for this category can cater their approach to a variety of workforce needs of the community or communities served but must identify the primary sectors that will be targeted.

Each Center will be identified in state marketing materials based on the designations described above.

Advisory Boards

It is expected that each Center of Workforce Excellence be industry driven. Industry should be involved at the macro and micro level of program development and management. Below is clarification of the expected role of local industry.

Executive Level Advisory Committee: Each Center of Workforce Excellence should establish an Executive Level Advisory committee which will assume the responsibility of leading and supporting the overall effort at the local level. The majority of the membership should include decision level leaders from the identified industry sector(s) to be targeted, as well as leadership from educational providers and other appropriate stakeholders. This industry led group will be accountable for ensuring goals and objectives are met and will report performance to the Governor’s Council as required and requested.

An existing advisory group can be utilized for this purpose, but commitment letters should be provided to demonstrate an understanding of the expectation and role they will provide for the committee.

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Subject Level Advisory Committees: Each Center of Workforce Excellence should identify subject matter advisory committees who will be responsible for aligning curriculum and resources at the micro-level. These individuals should be professionals who work directly in the field of focus of the Centers education and training efforts. These individuals should have expert level, working knowledge, of the careers that will be part of the Centers efforts. Many times, members of the Executive Team can identify candidates from their organization who would be well equipped to serve in this capacity.

Existing advisory groups can be used for these committees. A list of names and titles should be provided to demonstrate expertise and alignment of skills and knowledge.

Organization and Structure

Organization Chart: Each application should provide a completed organizational chart that clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities at the local level. A template of the organizational chart is provided in the Application Guide on page 1 to help facilitate development.

Organizational Structure: In addition to the Organizational Chart, each community should provide a completed Organizational Structure. An example of this is provided on page 7 of the application guide.

Planning and Progress

Benchmarking: Each application should clearly identify the bench marking process with identified goals and objectives and scheduled evaluations.

The objective areas identified in Oklahoma Works Together are:

1. **Economic growth** – impact to local economic growth and prosperity as a Center.
Examples: jobs added, company expansion, company recruitment, ad valorem growth, sales tax growth, labor market participation rate, etc.
2. **Education effectiveness** – education pipeline aligns with labor market, educational preparation PK-advanced degree, educational opportunities at all levels
Examples: enrollments, industry credentials, certifications, degrees, high school equivalency (GED), articulation, career pathways, work-based learning experiences, industry-education engagement, teacher externships, etc.
3. **Efficiency** - Shared resources, accessibility
Examples: partner investments, student access to programs, streamline processes, point of contact for engagement, alignment of local, state, federal funds to commitment of the Center.

The goals identified in the application must be measurable and supported by data presented in the application. If no data is currently available, please identify projected baseline year. The goal evaluation will be provided to the Governor's Workforce Council annually as a portion of the consideration for continued certification.

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Approvals

The standard for a Center of Workforce Excellence is high and applications must demonstrate a sound plan and structure as outlined in the application guide and this addendum. The minimum score for consideration is a 45 out of 50 possible points. Applications that do not meet this high standard will be provided feedback that identifies each area which did not meet expectations. Applications can be re-submitted for the next round of evaluations.

The approval process will also take into consideration whether a proposal is actively being implemented or whether it is in the early planning stages. Applications will be approved based on the current status of the program as described below.

Planning Stage Approval: Applications meeting expectations but are still in the planning stage will be provided a planning stage approval. Once the plan is considered implemented, the application can be re-submitted. When approved, the status will be updated and included in state marketing materials. The following scenarios are examples of an application that would be considered as Planning Stage.

- **Executive Advisory Committee:** Leadership committee outlined, membership commitments established, purpose and mission identified; yet no evidence of recent or historical activity.
- **Education Innovation:** Partnership commitments established, sound educational alignment demonstrated, strategies, goals and objectives set; yet no recent or historical activity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Convener and stakeholders identified, roles and responsibilities set, structure of alignment demonstrated; yet no recent or historical activity.

Operational Approval: Applications which fully meet the standards outlined in the Application Guide and prove that the system strategies are being actively implemented will be provided full approval and will be included in state marketing materials.

- **Executive Advisory Committee:** Leadership committee outlined, membership commitments established, purpose and mission identified; evidence exists of recent and historical activity.
- **Education Innovation:** Partnership commitments established, innovative educational alignment demonstrated, goals and objectives set; evidence exists of recent and historical activity.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Convener and stakeholders identified, roles and responsibilities set, structure of alignment demonstrated; evidence exists of recent and historical activity.