



WIRED Evaluation Overview Generations II & III

Presented by Nancy Hewat, Ph.D., Project Director
Kevin Hollenbeck, Ph.D., Principal Investigator

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Our Team

- Project Director
 - Nancy C. Hewat, Ph.D.
- Principal Investigator
 - Kevin Hollenbeck, Ph.D.
- Team Leaders
 - Jeffrey D. Padden
 - Laurence Rosen, Ph.D.
 - Jason Preuss
 - George Erickcek
 - Nancy McCrohan, Ph.D.

Our Team, continued

- Nancy C. Hewat, Ph.D.
 - Project Director who provides overall project oversight
 - Site visit team leader with strengths in qualitative research, large-scale project management, workforce development policy
 - Director of the Education, Workforce, and Economic Development business group of Public Policy Associates, Inc.

Our Team, continued

- Kevin Hollenbeck, Ph.D.
 - Principal Investigator who provides oversight of data collection and analysis
 - Site visit team leader with strengths in economic results of workforce and education policy and quantitative and qualitative methods
 - Assistant Executive Director and Senior Economist for W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research

Scope of the Evaluation

- WIRED includes three generations of investment
- The WIRED evaluation is a collaborative effort
 - Generation I = BPA and UCSD
 - Generations II and III = PPA and Upjohn
- Key differences between the generations
 - Size of investment [\$15 mil v. \$5 mil]
 - Role of workforce investment boards
- Similarities in overall intent regardless of ETA investment amount

Intent of WIRED

WIRED goes beyond traditional strategies for worker preparation by bringing together state, local and federal entities; academic institutions (including K-12, community colleges and universities); investment groups; foundations; and business and industry to address the challenges associated with building a globally competitive and prepared workforce.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration <http://www.doleta.gov/wired/about/>, accessed Jan. 29, 2008.

Research Questions

- Evaluation of Gen II and III will examine the WIRED Initiative from multiple perspectives
 - How were partnerships formed and how did they evolve around WIRED?
 - How did the regions design and implement their WIRED strategy?
 - How did the regional partners work cooperatively toward economic strength?
 - How did the regions leverage regional resources and support innovation?

Research Questions, continued

- Evaluation of Gen II and III will examine ETA's WIRED strategy from multiple perspectives
 - What barriers to innovation were encountered and how were they addressed?
 - To what extent has the talent development system been transformed?
 - What effect has the regional WIRED initiative had on the regional economy?
 - What lessons can be learned by looking across all three WIRED generations?

Theory of Change

- Guided by our past research, PPA and Upjohn have identified nine key factors that may contribute to success:
 - Governance/decision-making structure
 - Effective engagement of collaborators
 - Context for collaboration
 - Use of data
 - Planning
 - Activities
 - Communications
 - Resource adequacy and sustainability
 - Social networking

Data Sources

- Visits to the regions – two rounds
- Surveying regional stakeholders – two rounds
- Extant data analysis to complement qualitative data

Site Visits to Regions

- Visits to all 26 regions in Gen II and III
 - Round One – after implementation plans in place or when plans are nearly done (Summer and early Fall 2008)
 - Round Two – near the conclusion of the region's WIRED grant

Site Visits to Regions, continued

■ Pre-Visit Planning

- Each region will receive a site visit planning guide
- Site visit team will work in collaboration with each region to arrange the visit
- Two-person site visit team
- Up to four days on site
- Timed to coincide with any WIRED events
- Interviews with ETA Co-Leads

Site Visits to Regions, continued

- Data collection methods
 - Stakeholder interviews
 - Roundtable discussions
 - Focus groups
 - Collection of any additional documents, regional research studies, or other regional data that may be available

Site Visits to Regions, continued

- Likely discussion topics
 - Establishment and structure of partnerships
 - Changing nature of partnerships
 - Leveraging funds
 - Implementation activities
 - Interaction with ETA and other technical assistance providers
 - Data collection to document outcomes
 - Lessons of value to others

Survey

- Purpose is to “measure” collaboration and network formation (from broader perspective than site visits)
- Precise questions being drafted, but will tie back to nine dimensions in Theory of Change, i.e., governance, engagement of collaborators, etc.

Comparison Group Approach

- Approach is to collect and analyze data for regions, groups of counties that are comparable, and states
- To focus on targeted sectors
- Recognizing lags in data that make analysis suggestive rather than rigorous

Comparison Groups of Counties

- To get some sense of causality, i.e., did WIRED activities lead to economic outcomes or not, need to have a benchmark
- Our benchmark is groups of counties (within the state, in contiguous state(s), or in other states) that are similar according to key economic variables
- We'll also look at outcomes for the whole state that houses each WIRED region

Comparison Groups of Counties

(continued)

- “Matching” variables include measures of:
 - Industrial mix
 - Entrepreneurship
 - Population density
 - Education and income
 - Recent trends in population and employment

Economic and Workforce (Talent) Development Outcomes

- Outcome variables include (but not limited to):
 - Growth in employment within sectors and regions
 - Productivity
 - Wages; Target is high-skill, high-wage workforces
 - Unemployment

Economic and Workforce (Talent) Development Outcomes

- Outcome variables include (but not limited to):
 - Tax base
 - Business start-ups; Important for regions focusing on entrepreneurship and innovation
 - Formal education certificates and degrees
 - K-12 graduates (dropouts)
 - STEM enrollments

Economic and Workforce (Talent) Development Outcomes

- Outcome variables include (but not limited to):
 - Patents
 - Venture capital investments
 - Market share
 - Profitability

Summary

- Evaluation of the WIRED Gen. II and III
 - Gain a comprehensive understanding of regional efforts to implement WIRED
 - Identify innovative approaches to transforming the workforce development system
 - Yield helpful insights about the WIRED model's ability to promote regional workforce and economic growth.

Looking Ahead

- Scheduling first round of site visits
- First Interim Report (early 2009)
- Special issue papers

Innovation resides at the intersection of invention and insight, leading to the creation of social and economic value.

Source: WIRED to the Innovation Economy, Slide 16, undated, from the National Innovation Initiative of the Council on Competitiveness, <http://www.doleta.gov/wired/files/WIREDToInnovatoinEconomy.pdf>, accessed Jan. 26, 2008.

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