

<b>Northeastern Workforce Development Board (NWDB)</b> <b>General Policies and Procedures</b> <b>PARTNERING WITH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE</b>	
<b>Policy 004</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE: 8/15/2016</b> <b>Revised: 09-14-2023</b>
<b>Approved by Northeastern Workforce Development Board</b>	<b>Executive Director</b> <i>Jalan Williamson</i>

**BACKGROUND:**

The State Workforce Board (SWB) has identified the state’s local Chambers of Commerce as vital resources for business input into the workforce development system. Meetings among the Governor’s office, the SWB, and Maine’s eight regional Chambers through the Maine Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (MAACE) have resulted in an agreement that the Chamber of Commerce regions can convene the local businesses through the local Chambers and facilitate discussions that provide input to LWDBs on workforce needs in the business community.

State Workforce Board policy requires that the NWDB establish a partnership with Chambers of Commerce in Local Area. This policy requires a formal relationship, such as including a chamber director to serve as a NWDB member and develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), between NWDB and the Chambers of Commerce located within Aroostook, Washington, Penobscot, Piscataquis, and Hancock counties.

**Rationale:**

- To increase collaboration and foster stronger partnerships between workforce development activities and economic development activities;
- To formalize a specific relationship that provides deliberate business input to inform local workforce development activities, programs, and services;
- To facilitate partnership in reaching the objectives tracked by the SWB Scorecard and to gain additional information in addressing employment and training needs, with the goal of leveraging and maximizing workforce and economic development resources.

**GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR PARTNERING WITH CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE:**

**Formalizing the Partnership:** NWDB will formalize its working relationship through a Memorandum of Understanding, where appropriate, with all of the active local Chambers of Commerce within the Local Area. The formalization of its partnership with chambers of commerce will outline the purpose to establish and maintain programs, services and activities that engage employers in workforce development planning and connect them to workforce development services. Specifically, partnerships are to ensure awareness of connection to the Workforce Partners, with the intended outcome of increasing effective, business-led workforce development activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, employment of individuals in high wage and high growth occupations and industry, and business-responsive job training programs.

**Negotiation of Activities to be Implemented:** As part of the agreement process, NWDB and local Chambers will negotiate activities to be implemented by both parties.

**Activities for Inclusion in MOU:** Agreed upon activities outlined in formal Chamber-NWDB contracts/ agreements may include some of the following activities suggested by the SWB.

Chambers could:

- Provide a monthly column on employment issues/services in their newsletters
- Encourage members to list job vacancies with Maine Job Link
- Hold their meetings at a Workforce Partners facility
- Co-host/co-sponsor events (job fairs, conferences, targeted events for specific industries or specific job seeking populations, business awards, roundtables, workshops, etc)
- Invite LWDB and/or Workforce Partners personnel to speak at Chamber meetings and events
- Co-brand certain products or activities to leverage LWDB, Workforce Partners, and Chamber reputation and public image (workshops, outreach materials, etc)
- Provide website links to the Workforce Partners, LWDBs, other workforce development entities, provide info on Chamber website on LWDBs/Workforce Partners
- Co-write op-eds
- Share mailing lists with Workforce Partners
- Co-support job training programs
- Provide incentives to members who work with Workforce Partners, list job vacancies with Maine Job Link, other...
- Connect businesses with business services with Workforce Partners
- Assist workforce development partners with grant proposals
- Partner on special projects to increase presence of older workers, people with disabilities, veterans, women, youth, and minority individuals in their members' workforces

LWDB/Workforce Partners could:

- Host special programs for businesses that help increase Chamber membership while promoting Workforce Partners services
- Use the Chamber as a mechanism to identify local industry partnerships and develop programs to meet local industry partnership needs
- Use their connection to Chambers to perform outreach to businesses
- Offer technical assistance programs to Chamber members on: OJTs, Apprenticeship, Competitive Skills Scholarship Program (CSSP), foreign labor needs, SafetyWorks!, labor market information, posting job vacancies with the Maine Job Link, wage and hour law, child labor law, other labor law updates and reviews, other
- Help businesses identify training providers for their workforces
- Offer to write columns and articles for Chamber publications
- Co-host/co-sponsor events (job fairs, conferences, targeted events for specific industries or specific job seeking populations, business awards, roundtables, workshops, etc)
- Invite Chamber members to business-targeted/business only programs, events
- Establish a business oriented award, collaborate with Chamber on this
- Partner on special projects to increase presence of older workers, people with disabilities, veterans, women, youth, and minority individuals in their members' workforces
- Provide website links to local Chambers, provide info about local Chambers on LWDB and Workforce Partners websites

- Facilitate connections among Chambers of Commerce and other programs and services that serve job seekers and workers, especially local community based organizations and service providers
- Membership in local Chambers of Commerce

NWDB and local Chambers of Commerce shall be creative, innovative, experimental, and flexible in creating a plan for, and implementation of shared activities.

**The SWB Performance Scorecard:** When the SWB implements a scorecard, NWDB will measure the regional Chambers' penetration into their local business community, Workforce Partners business service utilization by local employers, Chambers' dissemination of workforce information and promotion of workforce development system resources and programs, partnerships between Chambers and workforce development system programs, and other data that tracks business services, activities, and employment data.

**Establishing and Meeting Performance Goals:** Performance goals will be mutually agreed to by the NWDB and Chambers of Commerce and other associations, as applicable. Baseline metrics will be established during the first year of this policy's implementation and those indicators will be monitored and evaluated. In year two and three, progress will be noted and assessed. Future performance objectives will then be established.

**Collection and Reporting of Metrics:** The SWB Scorecard will identify the data to be tracked. The metrics will be collected and reported by the NWDB on the Performance Scorecard and submitted to the State Workforce Investment Board.