

GRAND JURY

County of Yolo

P. O. Box 2142
Woodland, California 95776

2011-2012

FINAL REPORT

YOLO COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

June 7, 2012

YOLO COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

SUMMARY

Workforce Investment Board (WIB) membership composition is mandated by the Federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and must include members from a variety of community and business sectors of Yolo County (YC). The majority of members must be from the business sector.

The WIB has authority to make policy decisions for the YC One Stop Career Centers (One Stops). The Grand Jury determined that the WIB is often the passive recipient of information provided by the One Stop operators rather than the initiator of policy.

The Grand Jury found the following concerns:

- a lack of quorum at board meetings
- a deficit in the requisite number of business members
- business members may not have “optimum hiring authority or policy making authority”

REASONS FOR THE INVESTIGATION

Given the high level of local unemployment, the Grand Jury was interested in learning more about the current labor market and the County’s effort to create jobs and provide employment services.

California Penal Code sections 925 and 925a allow the Grand Jury to investigate and report on the operations, accounts, and records of the officers, departments, or functions of the county, including special districts and any incorporated city or joint powers agency located in the county.

ACTIONS TAKEN

The Grand Jury attended three WIB general meetings, one executive committee meeting, and toured the One Stops, located in Woodland and West Sacramento.

The Grand Jury interviewed:

- WIB members
- Department of Employment and Social Services (DESS) staff
- One Stop staff

The Grand Jury reviewed:

- federal legislation
- state regulations
- state recertification documents
- local resolutions, protocols and policies
- WIB orientation materials and by-laws
- WIB minutes, agendas and marketing materials
- job websites including the Virtual One Stop

WHAT THE JURY DETERMINED

The Workforce Investment Board

The WIA provides funds for local communities to assist job seekers, develop a work-ready labor force and to assist employers in understanding the local labor market, job creation and rapid response to downsizing. In Yolo County, this work is performed by the One Stops, operated by the DESS, with oversight by the WIB.

The WIB is a partnership of business, labor, education, non-profit, government and community leaders. The WIB is “to promote the participation of private sector employers in workforce investment activities.” WIB membership composition is mandated by federal law (the WIA), as supplemented by state law. Board of Supervisors (BOS) Resolution 08-77 states membership must include:

- a majority from local private business
- two educational entities
- 10-15% from labor organizations
- two community-based organizations
- two economic development agencies
- each of Yolo County’s One Stop Partners

The number of members (listed on the WIB roster as 39) can vary according to the percent of labor (10-15%) and the number of One Stop partners. New members do not receive formal orientation to legislative mandates, program operations or One Stop tours.

WIB by-laws state that “Representatives of local business organizations and business trade organizations shall be nominated by local business organizations and business trade organizations. They shall include individuals with optimum policy making or hiring authority. They shall represent businesses that reflect employment opportunities in Yolo County.” (Resolution 08-77 Section 2c (i)) The WIB membership application form does not screen for “optimum policy making or hiring authority”.

Certification of the WIB

All WIB's in California were subject to recertification in December 2010 by the California WIB. Recertification depended on the achievement of performance standards for employment of adults, dislocated workers, and youth, a showing that the WIB had carried out its mandated functions and complied with the membership requirements of the WIB. The WIB was required to explain any vacant positions.

In October 2010, the Yolo County WIB responded to the State, reporting six members short of the required business member majority. In explanation, the YC WIB noted that the vacancy times "vary due to the downturn in the economy resulting in business closures, and the expiration of term dates". The need to recruit business members was recognized and a recruitment strategy including "current board members reaching out to their business association contacts with the intent of having a business majority by the end of fiscal year 2010" was indicated.

The YC WIB was recertified by the California Workforce Investment Board in December 2010. However, because a majority of business members was lacking, the WIB is subject to continued reporting requirements, including a recommendation to provide a "timeline for recruiting business members". To date, no timeline has been submitted.

Business Membership

Business member attendance at board meetings has been sporadic, with some members not attending at all, contributing to a lack of a quorum. WIB by-laws permit removal of a member after three absences from the meetings, although this provision has never been used.

In July 2011, after limited success in recruiting private business representatives, the WIB assigned DESS staff, on a half-time basis, to recruit business members. The WIB is currently four members short of the required business member majority.

YC has a farm based economy. Testimony showed that no effort has been made to recruit members from agribusiness.

Quorum at Board Meetings

Due to a lack of quorum at previous meetings, the January 2012 agenda packet was 62 pages, much of which was previously un-ratified business. Minutes are not immediately available due to lack of quorum to ratify minutes.

In 2010, the WIB lacked a quorum for two meetings out of six and in 2011 attendance fell short of a quorum four out of six meetings. The current Board has considered increasing the meetings from bi-monthly to monthly in the hope of increasing commitment among its members. However, monthly meetings in 2009 also fell short of a quorum half the time.

One Stop Oversight

The WIB is granted responsibilities for the One Stops. In its recertification request, the WIB certified that it performs mandated functions including “Program oversight: The WIB provides guidance and oversight by establishing local policies for the One Stops, with focus on responsiveness to community and changing economic conditions”.

The Grand Jury determined that the WIB is often the passive recipient of information provided by the One Stop operators, rather than the initiator of policy.

DESS combines employment and social services at the One Stops. While the availability of these social services is a boon to the One Stops’ job seekers, Board members acknowledge it does contribute to the misperception on the part of business that the One Stop has little to offer the business community.

The One Stops’ current promotional packet advertises an “employer hot-line”. Despite the WIB’s stated intent to reach out to business, witnesses interviewed by the Grand Jury had no knowledge of what the “employer hotline” was or what it did.

FINDINGS

- F1** The general public and some businesses may not be aware of the services of the WIB and One Stop Career Centers.
- F2** The WIB has not actively recruited agribusiness to the Board.
- F3** The WIB business members are not screened for having “optimum policy making or hiring authority”.
- F4** New WIB members do not receive formal orientation to legislative mandates, program operations or One-Stop tours.
- F5** The business members of the WIB do not take an active role in establishing policy, but rather, are the recipients of information provided by the One Stop Career Centers.
- F6** Ratification of WIB actions have been delayed due to the lack of a quorum at many scheduled board meetings.
- F7** The WIB has not recommended removal of any members for absences of three or more, as permitted by their by-laws.
- F8** Attracting business members to the Workforce Investment Board is a long standing issue in Yolo County. The WIB has not provided a timeline for recruiting business members nor have WIB members actively recruited from the business community.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1** The WIB should create linkages with the business community and enlist aid from cities, Chambers of Commerce and the Yolo County Board of Supervisors to support their marketing efforts to increase public and business awareness of the WIB while increasing the WIB's connection to the business community.
- R2** WIB members should actively recruit members from businesses, including agribusiness.
- R3** The WIB application for business membership should be revised to screen for "optimum policy making or hiring authority".
- R4** WIB members should tour and receive an orientation to the One Stops in both Woodland and West Sacramento by December 31, 2012.
- R5** The WIB should provide the State with a timeline for recruiting business members by December 31, 2012.
- R6** Member absences from WIB meetings should be reviewed. Absent members should be contacted to determine their interest in continuing with the WIB.
- R7** WIB should provide services to unemployed individuals of any economic status by marketing the on-line career services of the One Stop.
- R8** The WIB should circulate informational minutes to keep WIB members informed and interested.

GLOSSARY

DESS	Department of Employment and Social Service
Dislocated Workers	Laid off or terminated workers
EDD	California Employment Development Department
One Stop	Created by the WIA with oversight from the WIB and is operated in Yolo County by the DESS to provide employment assistance to employers and job seekers
Virtual One Stop	Internet site for employment assistance
WIA	Workforce Investment Act (Federal), August 1998

WIB

Workforce Investment Board, Yolo County established March 2000

RESPONSE FOR RESPONSE

Pursuant to Penal Code Sections 933(c) and 933.05, the Grand Jury requests responses as follows:

From the following governing bodies:

- Yolo County Board of Supervisors, Recommendations R1 and R6
- Department of Employment & Social Services Director, Recommendations R4

From the following individual:

- Workforce Investment Board Chair, Recommendations R1 through R8