Introduction

On December 12 and 13, 2007 47 people representing a second broad group of stakeholders in the future of the economy and workforce in Nebraska gathered in Lincoln for the second FutureForce Forum. Since the previous Forum one year ago there has been significant work developing four specific streams of work to operationalize the vision established a year ago - a vision in which state agencies, educational institutions and employers from throughout the state would collaborate to address the significant workforce shortages in Nebraska. Participants in this years planning process included State and local workforce development, the Department of Labor, economic development, the Department of Education, k-12 educators, higher education as well as representatives from a cross section of employers around the state.

Day One

The first day of this planning session focused on broadening the understanding of the value of the FutureForce streams of work (Think Nebraska!, Career Connections, The Talent Pipeline, and Partnerships for Innovation) while also challenging the participants to develop specific goals, milestones and success measures for each. We also focused on strengthening the interconnectivity between the four streams of work and not allowing them to exists as “stand alone pillars” of work.

Day Two

On the morning of the second day an additional 30 participants joined the group. The morning was spent in a dialog about the FutureForce initiatives - the big picture, the goals and the major milestones. After hearing about the initiatives the group was challenged to articulate some key enabling factors to support these work streams as well as to clearly spell out any obstacles that might need to be overcome in order to achieve the goals articulated by the group. In the afternoon of the second day the group that worked on the first day developed action steps to achieve the milestones for each stream of work.

This document reflects the work of the participants in the planning and design session. Our sincere thanks to all of the participants, whose creativity and hard work are documented in this report!

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For additional information you may also view these websites:
http://www.futureforcenebraska.org
http://www.innovationlabs.com/futureforce/index.html
# Day One Participants

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Career Clusters Model

FutureForce Nebraska gives young people and adults concrete information on how to seek and prepare for careers with dynamic futures: career opportunities and selection, career preparation and readiness, and training for advancement or transition to new careers. FutureForce Nebraska is in motion.

The following list identifies current FutureForce Nebraska career pathway projects:

- Agricultural Systems
- Biotechnology/BioSciences
- Construction
- Education & Training
- Entrepreneurship
- Finance
- Health Science
- Manufacturing / Engineering
- Transportation, Distribution, Warehousing, and Logistics

To be kept apprised of FutureForce Nebraska projects, see [www.FutureForceNebraska.org](http://www.FutureForceNebraska.org).

The Career Fields and Clusters Model was developed by Nebraska Career Education to show students, parents, educators, and employers how educational choices relate to career opportunities. Developed originally in 2004, it is now being used throughout the USA and in other nations as well.
FutureForce Nebraska

Goals:
- Engage stakeholders to collaborate
- Create template and toolkit for new pathways in conjunction with pathway partners
- Identify and promote promising practices and successes across the state
- Address barriers to success for each of the four pillars
- Create marketing/communication plan
- Educator Forum
- Sustainability plan

Milestones:
- Completion of template and toolkit by June 08
- Best practices and successes on website by Nov 08
- Sustainability plan in place by July 08
- Mar-com plan by March 08
- Conduct focus groups with pillar sub-committees by April 08

The Big Picture:
To be the one reliable source for the identification of high wage, high demand careers for Nebraska’s talent pipelines. To facilitate collaboration between business and educational communities in Nebraska.

Headlines:
- FutureForce Nebraska Education Business partnership increases workforce in XX (target industry)
- New Degree Programs created by FFN partnerships
- Increased Worker Retention
- FFN raises awareness of talent pipelines

Success Measures:
- Have in place 3 non-grant sources of funding by 7/08
- 2 toolkits distributed by 12/08
- Execute Mar-com in every HS in NE by 12/08
- Increase website hits by 20% every 6 months
- 80% participation in focus groups by sub-committees

Story:
- FutureForce Nebraska Education Business partnership increases workforce in XX (target industry)
- New Degree Programs created by FFN partnerships
- Increased Worker Retention
- FFN raises awareness of talent pipelines
**FutureForce Nebraska**
We wanted to look at FutureForce the umbrella and not just look at the pillars. We said our big picture is that we will be the one reliable resource for identifying high-wage, high demand careers in Nebraska. We also facilitate collaboration between education, business, workforce and economic development resources.

What is the sustainability model? Funding is derived each year for the next year. Currently the staff spends a lot of energy securing funding for the following year. We want to move beyond grants and develop a more sustainable financial model. We will create a template and toolkit to help bring some consistency and alignment to the pathways. This will also be something any new pathways can use. We will address the barriers to success of each of the four focus areas of work.

One of the signs of success for us is an Increase in workforce retention. We would also see new degree programs being developed based on partnerships we've helped facilitate. We'd want to see an increase in the workforce in high demand industries. We want to have a website that has user generated content. We need to develop a Marketing and Communication plan. What is going on across the pillars? What are the measures of success for all of this? What is the core focus? We need to identify successful outcomes. This will include reporting on processes and activities.

What headline would hit home with people and make them say, “we couldn’t live without FutureForce in the state of Nebraska?”

What is our responsibility to create new career paths? Can things be aligned so that there aren't multiple organizations doing strategic planning, etc. around these same issues? Should FutureForce be focused on the future and work to identify things that haven’t emerged yet? When does a pipeline end? What is the sunset clause? When does the program end? Can the conversation move from territoriality to ultimate goals? Less talk about funding and staffing. More about goals and outcomes.

Is there a component missing? We're focusing on replenishing the talent pool and looking at why people are leaving? Do we know that the jobs that are being created match what people want? There are lots of jobs available but people are leaving because of personal choices. They want to go overseas or to bigger cities. People do come back after about 5 years. What can we do to make sure that people come back after 5 years or don’t leave in the first place? Leaving is good too as it brings diversity into the group. Of the people that leave, do they know that there are new jobs available in Nebraska now? What are we doing to reach them? Alumni groups aren't helping out much yet to communicate with former residents. The big stories in the paper help families pass the news on to family and friends. We're seeing that there are not a lot of positive attitudes about Nebraska, especially in the rural areas.

We need something like a campaign to get people to go back to “Nebraska: The Good Life”. This effort is cyclical. It was experienced 15 years ago. What is not sustainable about the programs in the past? Universities in other states start recruiting as soon as alumni have kids. College isn’t for everybody. High school kids can learn a trade and then apply it right out of high school. We also need to redefine what a high wage job is: is it $100k per year? Kids are looking at how much they’ll make in the occupation and that is some of the motivation for a career. Career Connections presents an end state and not the ladder to get to that end state. Students don’t see where the start is, they see the end. Some of the CEOs of railroads started in entry level positions and worked their way up to be the CEO. Teachers start at $32k per year. The total including benefits is around $45k per year.
Talent Pipeline

**Goals**
- Curriculum built on strengths & interests that engage / excite learners to achieve innovation and creativity
- Expand the talent pool
- Enhance relevance and real-world experiences in education
- Develop dual-credit course and promote statewide utilization
- Improved collaboration and understanding between education and business
- Retool skills

**To engage and educate all Nebraskans about the Career opportunities in our great state that focus on high skills, high wage, and high demand.**

**Milestones**
- Establish statewide programs that places teachers at a job in a career pathway during summer (summer 09)
- Integration of career cluster curriculum in every NE school system (2010)
- Establish business mentorships for teachers and students (2010)
- Establish database of existing school programs
  - Catalog employers that pay for continuing education in any of the pathways
  - Increase the number of students enrolled in dual-credit courses

**Headlines**
- Nebraska Chambers of Commerce report significant increase in skilled workforce

**The Story**
- RDE is pleased to announce a 25% increase in the number of student enrolling in NE post-secondary institutions

**Success Measures**
- 10% increase in schools offering mentorships for each career path
- Increase retention in NE Schools and Workforce
- Growth in talent pool
- Number of students enrolled in dual credit courses increases by 20%

**Increased use of NE Career Connections web site**
Talent Pipeline
Our big picture is to engage and educate all Nebraskans about the career opportunities in our great state that focus on high skills, high wage and high demand.

We want to expand the talent pool because of the labor and workforce shortages, we want to focus on non-traditional workers and immigrants. Somewhat tied to this is how to apply what you learn to real world contexts. We also need to engage teachers to know what real world is in this way.

We want to have collaboration between education and business. There is a fear factor here. A challenge of this is to think about retooling skills. As new careers pop up, we need to know how to help skill our workers.

The milestones we considered establishing a statewide program of teachers at a variety of levels at jobs or internships on a career pathway as part of their professional development. We want to establish business mentorships, enhanced partnerships both for teachers and students. We want to establish a statewide database of programs that offer the various resources. We want also a capability to share best practices through the website. We want to also increase the number of students enrolled in dual credit courses. We want all of these things done by 2010.

We have a list of metrics to so that we know whether we’ve been successful or not. If we were to imagine headlines for the paper we though see these couple of things would be wonderful.

We also took a cut at a template that all the pathway groups could use to help them organize their area. We would include areas for innovation and creativity, using technology that is leading edge and appropriate for the career pathway. We would have a list of skill sets required. Most of the pathways have done this. We also want them to develop dual credit courses. Another area is partnerships, such as citizen partnerships, high education, business and industry associations, apprenticeships and internships, career student organizations, non-profit organizations and community service organizations.

In order to connect all the pathway groups they should think of introducing the idea of entrepreneurship in students. They should collaboratively market what they're doing so that they know each others' work. We want to have relevance to real world experience. We want to focus on the common knowledge and skills. To assess the needs is an important way to identify who is our target audience. We want to identify where the shortages currently exist and where they shortages will be in the future. We want to have local and regional coordination. We want to provide data review and to transition more effectively between high school and post secondary to employment.
Talent Pipeline Template

Innovation
- Curriculum engages learner to achieve innovation & creativity
- Using technology
- Virtual learning - defines

Skills Sets Required
- Validate knowledge & skill statements for career cluster pathways
- Develop dual credit course(s) for model curriculum

Partnerships
- Citizen Ambassadors
  - Business Leaders
  - Educators
  - Parents
  - Students
- Business/Industry Assoc.
- Higher Education (2yr, 4yr)
- Apprenticeships/Internships
  - Teachers
  - Students
- Career/Student Organizations
- Non-profit Org.
  - Literacy Centre of Animas
  - Literary Centres
- Community Org.
  - Chamber/Civic Board/GOs

Connectivity Between Pathways
- Entrepreneur
- Marketing
- Relevance to RW
- Commonalities of knowledge & skills

Assessment of Needs
- I.D. Audience
- Expand Talent Pool
  - Innovation for
  - Adult Learner
  - Drop Outs
  - Non-College Bound
  - Entrepreneur
- I.D. Worker Shortage
- I.D. Career Interests
- Annual Review

Local & Regional Co-Ordination
- Implement FFN Marketing Plan
- Report Action Plans/Accomplishments thru FFN Website bi-annually
- FFN. Provide annual data from NB Career Connections
- Career Fairs
- Speakers Bureau
- Resource Sharing (BIN)
- Transition from K-8 to post-secondary to employment
- P-16
  - Mentorships/Apprenticeships

Engage Small Rural Communities

High Impact/High Satisfaction
Nebraska Career Connections

Goals
- Create awareness - marketing research and marketing plan
- Engage all stakeholders
- Continue development and enhancement of site
- Establish partnerships & endorsement
  - Partner with experts and best services and practices already established
  - Expand tools in web site to make it relevant to broader audience

Milestones
- Formal launch of site
- Development of marketing plan
- Endorsements by key partners
- Connect opportunities
- Implement tools

The Big Picture
Create and establish a web site to be a central location for jobs, education and career awareness in Nebraska. Promote Nebraska as a place to learn, earn, and live... for current residents and to attract new residents

Headlines
- Nebraska open for business, education advances, economy booms, and opportunities abound

The Story
- Nebraska Career Connections significantly improves the rate of retention and attraction of critical career workers to the state

Success Measures
- Talent development numbers = unfilled worker vacancies
- Labor market information
- X # of partners attend events
- Website metrics
- Buy-in from key entities
Nebraska Career Connections

The big picture for us is to create a website to be a central location for jobs, career and education awareness in Nebraska. We also want to promote Nebraska as a place to learn, earn and live both for current residents and to attract new residents.

One of the tools we have started to develop is the nebraskacareerconnections.org. Right now our website is not complete. Partnerships endorsements are essential. Has anyone ever tracked a career pathway? It’s part of the conversation we have to have. I’ve never done this.

If you look at how young people are today, you see that they stay in a job for one year. How do you fit that reality into the career pathway model?

We wanted to focus on the milestones to accomplish. We want to have a formal launch with a celebration. We want to increase the visibility and implement these new tools. Social networking is where young people are today. We would do a disservice to not include this for anything that we want to create connectivity.

Our success measures are what we need to be able to say that this is a success. We included talent development numbers. If you look at the new reports you'll see an increase of 12,000 unfilled jobs a year. If you look at the 78 to 55 ratio, which is 78 million people who are retiring and only 55 million people who will take their jobs.

To me, economic development is how we fill these jobs. Anything that helps us with that is included here. The website metrics will help us track where people are going on the site and what they’re using. With metrics you can find out exactly how many people are going to which tabs and how long they’re staying there.
Think Nebraska!

- Facilitate
  - Personal learning plan
  - Clearinghouse for best practices
  - Partnerships
  - Rigor / relevance
- Implement
  - Financial incentives
  - Professional development
- Coordinate
  - Transition school/work/college
  - Align initiatives

Think Nebraska! can help you create your future!

- Identify the players
- Redefine State Scholars
- Define purpose/benefits
- Define measurable outcomes
- Sustainability

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**HEADLINES**
- FutureForce recognized nationally

**THE STORY**
- Unprecedented surge in post-secondary enrollment, graduation rates...

**SUCCESS MEASURES**
- Increase in Personal Learning Plans
- Increase Partnerships
- Increase Post-secondary enrollment
- Increase graduation rates
- Increase new opportunities
- Increase rigor and relevance
Think Nebraska!
The current federal design of the State Scholars Initiative doesn’t fit into Nebraska very well, so we need to look at a re-design of the Think! Nebraska Scholars program. Think! Nebraska is focused on middle-school and high school students. We need to continue to build partnerships with parents, educators and business as well as facilitate rigor and relevance for each student. However, the prescribed set of courses for state scholars put out by the Federal Government may not be relevant for every student. We see Think! Nebraska as becoming a clearing house for best practices relating to student engagement, incentives to participate in the scholars program and effective teaching strategies. We also see the need for implementing personal learning plans for every student and providing a structure that all students can find a path to post-secondary education and the world of work.

We were thinking about incentives. We were looking at scholarships or other financial incentives. We could possibly consider reimbursements for college loans or have businesses pay the loans back? As well, we could tie the loan payback terms to the young people staying in Nebraska. The longer they stay in the state, the more of the loan gets reimbursed. The longer they stay in the state after graduation, the more likely it is they will stay and settle.

Professional development is really important in all of this. Teachers need professional development to see how the education merges into the real world. Another one of the biggest things to consider is to align these initiatives with the other programs like P-16, for example. Lots of programs are doing something like this, but might be calling it something different. Once the players are identified, we have to define what a state scholar is. It’s not just a prescribed set of classes. What are the purposes and benefits of being a state scholar? Why will colleges appreciate it if we identify a student as a state scholar? Why will businesses care? Economic sustainability is one of the biggest potential obstacles we have. If we are successful we will see increased graduation rates and increased enrollment in post-secondary institutions.

A quick story from Jim Walsh: When I went to talk to a high school class, I asked students to tell me how much they would get paid to drive a truck 1000 miles if they made 35 cents per mile. It took awhile for even a few people to try to answer. Some people said $3500, some said $35. One even said $35,000.

Industry needs people who are thinkers. We have found that a person needs to learn 4 years of English in order to extract the relevant materials out of technical manuals. Diesel technicians are going to school at night to become engineers. Industry needs people to go to all kinds of post-secondary education. Teachers don’t often know what goes on in the business world. They need to get out of the 4 walls a little bit more.

Comment: An important point to remember is that this program could take 4 years to find some efficiency, just because of the length of time that it will take for a student to move through the entire secondary school system. We have to be prepared to take the long view on this program.
Partnerships for Innovation

**Goals**
- Successful secondary to post-secondary transitions for students
- Student technical skill assessment
- Professional development for secondary and post-secondary educators
- Development of curriculum in emerging areas
- Improved data and reporting systems

**Milestones**
- Statewide system of transition for all students
- A statewide system of support to meet the needs of technical skill attainment
- Support incubation and development of curriculum resources and tools in emerging economic development areas

**THE BIG PICTURE**

PFI is a federally funded consortium of Nebraska Secondary and Post-Secondary institutions whose overall purpose is to improve career and technical education using creative solutions while meeting federal legislative requirements.

**HEADLINES**
- 256 public school districts and 7 colleges and business collaborate!
- Connecting the education and workforce pieces

**THE STORY**
- PFI brings schools together to meet federal legislation
- Statewide articulation and data systems established

**SUCCESS MEASURES**
- Increasing number of dual credit classes available and course completion rates
- Increasing number of academic teachers using business integration
- Students have access to innovative and progressive curriculum
- Increasing professional development options and enrollment of educators with improved impact
- Secondary and Post-secondary are collaboratively sharing data

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Increasing professional development options and enrollment of educators with improved impact
Secondary and Post-secondary are collaboratively sharing data
Partnerships for Innovation
I'd like to give you an overview. This is the only pillar that is federally funded by the Carl Perkins fund. It has been reauthorized and states were given the flexibility to form statewide consortia to meet certain obligations. The state of Nebraska has decided to withhold 10% to meet the needs of the consortia. We will have a 5 year plan submitted which gives a good problem of how to spend the $3-4 million dollars.

Our big picture is to improve career and technical education using creative solutions while meeting federal legislative requirements. Our goals for PFI are pretty well specified by the federal grant requirements. We need better technical skill assessment. We want to link data, possibly based on social security numbers. We don't have the ability to provide feedback to individual high schools for how their students are performing. They'd have to get information from every post secondary institution in the state. I'm not saying it will happen but it does give us the opportunity to start the dialogue.

For example, professional development will start with needs assessment. We need to have emerging technologies, so that when teachers say we need 'this' in our classrooms, the administrators understand and have those things.

In terms of implementing this, the PFI has only been established for the last couple of months. We've made some decisions but the consensus is that we'll have enough projects and sub-projects that we'll need a staff member to oversee the sub-components of the partnership.
Milestone Timeline

FutureForce
- Complete Templates / Toolkit
- Best Practices / Website
- Sustainability Plan
- MarCom Plan
- Focus (Pillars) define who what

Talent Pipeline
- Establish educator & student internships
- Implement Talent Pipeline Template
- Diversify Pipeline Committee Make-up
- Develop Guidelines for Mentorships
- Establish partnerships with career student organizations
- Provide educator professional development with B&I
- FFN presence at career fairs
- Pipeline champions meet quarterly

Think Nebraska!
- Identify Players
- Redefine state scholar
- Define Measurable Outcomes
- Sustainability

Partnerships for Innovation
- Hire Program Coordinator
- Needs Assessment
- Commission White Papers
- MarCom Efforts
- Develop Program of Work
- Revise Priority List
- NSSRS Accountability Report
- Assessment Programs/Projects

Career Connections
- Endorsement of Key Partners
- Form Task Force
- Kuder - increased / available data
- Marketing SECC and Beyond
- Development of Marketing Plan
FutureForce

Talent Pipeline
- Establish Citizen/Youth\n  Representatives
- Higher Ed offers credit for Prof Dev with B&I partners
- Establish website for promising practices
- Develop promotional materials for career paths

Think Nebraska!

Partnerships for Innovation
- PS/Accountability Reports
- Developing technical skills certification plan
- Transition plans for all school districts

Career Connections
- Formal Launch of site
- Align career clusters definitions/job descriptions w/business
- Connect Opportunities
- Implement CC Tools
Summary Model
Next Steps

The FutureForce Executive Board will review the contents of this document and will refine this work into a strategic action plan. This plan will guide our work and focus our work to enable partnerships and facilitate collaboration among all interested parties. The plan developed at the Planning and Design Session will provide the foundation for our work throughout 2008. We will be communicating further refinements as they become available.

We sincerely appreciate the contributions of everyone that participated in this important planning session. Combining the wisdom and experience of many amazing minds produced a series of great thoughts as we move forward to create the future of our state.

The plans discussed in this document will also be reviewed by the Nebraska Department of Education, Career Education staff as they continue their work implementing the State Plan for the Perkins Career and Technical Education Act funds.

The Journey Continues…