FINAL REPORT
SKILLS WISCONSIN: A WORKFORCE INNOVATION FUND GRANT INITIATIVE
FEBRUARY 15, 2017
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SKILLS WISCONSIN
An Overview of the Project

Skills Wisconsin was 1 of 26 projects selected as part of the Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant (Round 1) issued through the U.S. Department of Labor. The four-year project provided a platform for a consortium of Wisconsin's Workforce Development Boards to transform workforce services to businesses with five key components. The grant was awarded in late 2012 to the Workforce Development Board of South Central as the entity representing all eleven Wisconsin workforce development boards. The grant was fully implemented in calendar year 2013 and operated through 2016. The five components were:

- Staff training on a *demand-driven system* to view business as the customer
- Re-engineer work flow to improve *business outreach*
- Use business tools with a *customized Salesforce* cloud computing platform
- Increased *collaboration* among workforce programs and with economic development professionals
- Expand *industry partnerships* and implement new *career pathways* to meet industry needs
Business as the Customer

For the past several years, federal workforce programs have used language that identified the business, aka the employer, as an important customer but the reality was that workforce programs were all funded and measured based on the identified job seeker.

As a result, workforce programs operated historically on a transactional basis with case managers and job developers seeking jobs on a case by case basis that would meet the needs of their enrolled job seekers rather than a relationship basis, working with a business in an ongoing way to identify their needs with qualified workers.

The Skills Wisconsin project was designed with the idea that the business should be the primary customer and function as a demand-driven system rather than being supply-driven.

This also included the goal of closer alignment between workforce development and economic development to help support and build local economies.

The project included using different business tools such as Salesforce, retraining workforce to serve businesses, and most importantly, to collaborate on those services rather than compete for placements.

Economic and Legislative Context

The Skills Wisconsin project was awarded in August of 2012 in the midst of a slow economic recovery. The Wisconsin unemployment rate in December of 2012 was 6.9% and in November of 2016 it dropped to 4.1%.

The importance of developing business relationships to identify and meet their hiring needs became much more important as the labor market tightened.

Also somewhat unexpectedly, the new WIOA legislation was passed in 2014 so that midway through the project, the focus shifted to preparing for the new program implementation.

The emphasis in WIOA on business services and on workforce collaboration was seen as a positive sign to Wisconsin that this project helped prepare us to be on the right track.
In 2014, the annual Statewide Business Services Summit, Collabor8, was born to provide a unique opportunity for workforce professionals focused on serving businesses to come together to learn from each other.

The first Summit welcomed 200 attendees and featured sessions including: Collabor8ing in a Demand Driven World; What Business Needs and Expects from the Workforce System; Business Services Part 1 and 2: Developing the Relationship and the Toolkit; Industry Sector Partnerships: Building Sector Teams; Connecting Talent Pool To Business Needs – Flipping the Paradigm; Demand Driven “Territory Management/Rules Of Engagement” and, Targeted Sector-Based Labor Market Information

Each summit has built on the previous one, adding more sessions on developing relationships with businesses. Hearing from businesses directly has also been a feature at each Summit with business and industry sector panels.
Salesforce Customer Relationship Management System

The Salesforce customer relationship management (CRM) is a cornerstone of the Skills Wisconsin project, providing a collaborative platform for workforce staff to:

- Document and report on specific business engagement activities and services
- Share their business engagement activities with each other, across agencies and programs
- Engage with colleagues in other geographic areas to meet business needs regardless of boundaries
- Access and use data strategically for future business outreach and service planning

Skills Wisconsin partnered with Launchpad, a Salesforce vendor focused on bringing technology and training to professionals in the fields of both workforce and economic development. In 2012 and early 2013, Launchpad customized the CRM platform to meet the needs of the Skills Wisconsin project. They continue to be the licensing provider and have completed several enhancements to the platform as new needs were discovered.

In December 2016, there were 207 workforce system professionals with full Salesforce licenses in all eleven workforce areas. There were also 277 Chatter only free licenses that allow those Chatter users onto the social communicative platform.

The number of Services documented grew significantly each year as the area business services team members became more familiar with the platform and agreed on what and how to document their business service activities.

- **89,494** Business accounts created in Salesforce
- **65,176** Business contacts created in Salesforce
- **183,478** Business outreach activities conducted
- **22,989** Business services provided to companies
BUSINESS SOLUTIONS

Training Curriculum

In addition to the demand-driven training associated with using Salesforce, the team identified the need for a full day curriculum on Business Solutions for the public workforce system. A curriculum, featuring 5 modules, was developed in conjunction with Thomas P. Miller & Associates during 2015. In November of 2015, the business services leads were trained to be trainers from each of the 11 Wisconsin workforce areas. Since then, 100 workforce professionals have completed the training during one large statewide session and two regional sessions.

The WWDA Statewide Business Solutions Group plan to offer the training periodically as the need is identified to train more people.

Business Solutions Training Modules

1. **The Basics of Business Services**: Learn about the increased emphasis on serving businesses as a primary customer in the public workforce system.

2. **A Collaborative Approach**: Learn the five-step process to collaborate with partners in order to achieve success for all.

3. **Targeting Businesses & Understanding Industry Trends**: Learn techniques for using data sources to promote a better understanding, communication and service delivery.

4. **Understanding the Customer**: Master the art of getting to know the customer and uncovering their talent needs in a demand driven system.

5. **Defining Success**: How to frame the conversation of success.

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*My biggest takeaway was to focus on the customer and approach businesses with a “What can we do to help you?” attitude and then sharing that information with all of our partners.* – Business Solutions Training Participant
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Industry Partnerships

The Skills Wisconsin project had a related focus on growing industry partnerships and career pathways. Grant funds were provided to the eleven Workforce Development Boards to create, foster or enhance industry sector efforts. Forty projects were supported in a range of industries such as IT & Logistics, Transportation (3), Healthcare (4), Manufacturing (5), Information Technology (3), Logistics & Transportation, Construction, and Sustainable Foods.

The following definition was created and used to help define the approach to industry sector work:

An industry sector partnership (IP) provides a mechanism for employers in an industry sector to connect with each other, identify shared needs of their industry and work with partners to design new approaches that will solve the identified problems. IPs also is a strategy for WDBs to leverage our resources and create long term solutions and connections for our important regional industries. Wisconsin’s sector efforts exist along a continuum based on engagement and commitment of the industry. An established sector effort should include:

- A stable and committed group of businesses
- Industry champions in leadership roles
- Identified needs to address short and long term sector growth
- Activities and projects in place to address identified needs
- An ability to document impact and demonstrate ROI

Economic Development

Another focus of the project was to nurture better alignment between workforce development and economic development by sharing information on business skill needs and to collaborate on serving businesses in the regional economy. In 2015, the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) launched the In Force Network, a Salesforce Partner Community platform for economic development professionals. The intent was to share data across the two Salesforce platforms sharing pertinent data to help meet the hiring and growth needs of businesses. This project remains a work in progress as implementation of this has been inconsistent across the state and confidentiality is more of a concern between economic development agencies. There are also other systems used by many economic development organizations and therefore less support for a collaborative statewide system; however, the workforce system will continue to consider our economic development professionals as essential partners.
Career Pathways

As an indication of deep engagement with these industries, multiple Career Pathways curricula were created or supported in partnership with the Wisconsin Technical College System. Although Skills Wisconsin was not a traditional job training program, over 800 job seekers received training in one of the following career pathway training programs during the project.

- Accounting Assistant (9)
- Advertising Management
- Applied Mechanical CAD Technician
- Basic Machining (3)
- Composite Materials Technician
- Database Developer
- Flux Cored Arc Welding (FCAW)
- Gas Metal Arc Welding (GMAW)
- Gas Tungsten Arc Welding (GTAW)
- Health Office Assistant (2)
- Industrial Environmental Technician
- Industrial Maintenance Mechanic (4)
- Industrial Manufacturing Engineering Technician
- Industrial Safety Engineering Technician
- IT Help Desk
- IT Network Support for the Healthcare Professional
- Leadership Essentials
- Marketing Management
- Pathway to Automotive Service Technician
- Production Welding (3)
- Sales Management
- Shielded Metal Arc Welding (SMAW)
- Social Media Strategist
- Substance Abuse Counselor
- Water Technician
- Website Hardware/Software Administrator
A time line graphic was developed to showcase the evolution of the project. The graphic (right) was created for the Evaluation of Skills Wisconsin: Final Report, completed by IMPAQ International.

A general summary of the focus of each year was:

**2013**
Implement and train on the statewide use of Salesforce for all eleven Workforce Development Areas (WDA)

**2014**
Build on the area business service teams with Salesforce and the first Collabor8 Summit

**2015**
Continued focus on team building and the development of the Business Solutions Training

**2016**
Integrate all of the above into regular way of doing business and prepare for the end of the Workforce Innovation Fund grant resources
Collabor8 2014: The Statewide Business Services Summit

Collabor8 2015: The Statewide Business Services Summit

Statewide Business Services (SBS) Training

Collabor8 2016: The Statewide Business Services Summit

SBS Training

2014 Q1

2014 Q2

2014 Q3

2014 Q4

2015 Q1

2015 Q2

2015 Q3

2015 Q4

2016 Q1

2016 Q2

2016 Q3

2016 Q4

Emphasizing a Demand-Driven Approach to Business Services

Advancing Career Pathways and Industry Partnerships

Creating Business Services Curriculum and Training

Looking Ahead
PARTNER COORDINATION

The primary emphasis of the project was coordination and collaboration, between the eleven Workforce Development Boards and across workforce, economic development and education entities. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was established between the eleven Workforce Development Boards, Wisconsin Workforce Development Association (WWDA), Wisconsin Technical College System (WTCS), Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC), and Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development (DWD).

Workforce Development Boards (WDB) and the Statewide Business Services Group (SBSG)

To initially apply for the grant, in March 2012 the eleven Workforce Development Boards created a specific MOU and a consortium to implement “Skills Wisconsin: An Initiative to Improve Industry-Driven Worker Training Services.” (continued, p.13)

Wisconsin Workforce Development Areas

Each Workforce Development Board represents a specific Workforce Development Area in Wisconsin.

1 Southeast
2 Milwaukee County
3 Washington-Ozaukee-Waukesha
4 Fox Valley
5 Bay Area
6 North Central
7 Northwest
8 West Central
9 Western
10 South Central
11 Southwest
The opening language of the MOU was:

*The CONSORTIUM members agree to work collaboratively and in coordination, and in conjunction with other project PARTNERS described in the grant application and in a separate MOU, on a series of activities focused on the following Goal:*  

*To Implement a new on line business client management tool (Salesforce) and expand coordination among Workforce Development Boards (WDB) and economic development entities to improve the way that job seekers are attracted and matched to employment with emerging, expanding, and anchor businesses across the state, and to expand and customize training efforts to meet the needs of target industries.*

**Partners of the Project**

**Wisconsin Workforce Development Association** led the creation and implementation of the project providing oversight and guidance through their monthly meetings.

**Wisconsin Technical College System** used Skills Wisconsin and other federal grant funds to develop and expand current career pathways models and stackable credentials to address employer needs.

**Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation** created a Partner Community on a Salesforce platform to share business data with the workforce system. WEDC also assisted with the industry sector and career pathway development.

**Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development** provided access to state level program data for the evaluation of program outcomes. DWD also supported the local business services teams use of Salesforce which included The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation became an unexpected strong partner when the project coincided with their a new focus on connecting with businesses.

Over the past four years, the day to day work of carrying out this goal fell to the Statewide Business Service Group, an existing network of the Business Services Managers in each of the eleven Workforce Development Boards. These managers also served as the leaders of the local Business Services Teams in their respective areas. Throughout the course of the project they have been the implementers, the innovators, and the champions, providing the boots on the ground knowledge about meeting the hiring needs of Wisconsin businesses.
This four year project provided much opportunity to accomplish the original goals and also better understand the challenges. The transformation of the workforce system to a demand-driven one is still a work in progress as the state moves into full implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA). While WIOA calls for more emphasis on serving businesses and more collaboration, serious challenges remain due to multiple data systems, state versus local issues, and continued silo program funding and target populations.

To highlight the success and challenges, the following observations were made in IMPAQ International’s Final Report Executive Summary:

- Skills Wisconsin enhanced communication among workforce professionals from different WDAs, particularly among Executive Directors and Statewide Business Services Group Representatives.
- In several WDAs, Skills Wisconsin improved coordination among business services partners and streamlined communication about and with businesses.
- Salesforce has not yet become the universal business services solution that may have been envisioned, though several WDAs have strongly incorporated its use.
- Built-in incentives and senior-level buy-in seemed to increase Salesforce use and participation in Skills Wisconsin.
- Efforts to increase the quality and relevance of the Skills Wisconsin platform by linking to extant data sources have shown promise, but face ongoing challenges.
- Training programs are generally designed to respond to industry need, but in markets with low unemployment rates, industry and job seeker needs are not always aligned.
- Industry Partnerships have helped regions aggregate information about employer need and facilitate development of responsive training programs.
- Skills Wisconsin opened up channels of communication among partners, particularly DWD/DVR.
- The decentralized and fragmented nature of Economic Development Organizations statewide continues to create challenges to collaboration.
- Skills Wisconsin staff demonstrated flexibility, innovation, and adaptation while implementing the grant.

**Remarks from IMPAQ**

“The progress made through Skills Wisconsin provides a solid foundation for the state workforce system to continue to improve the way workforce system stakeholders collaborate with one another and how they serve Wisconsin businesses.”

“All things considered, the Skills Wisconsin experience has shown that a program aimed at improving how the workforce system serves businesses through a combination of the introduction of a CRM platform, training, and other efforts can help improve the degree of coordination and collaboration among workforce system stakeholders. Other states looking for ways to achieve similar goals should consider implementing similar programs modeled after Skills Wisconsin.”
PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Performance Outcomes
The Workforce Innovation Fund had an agreed upon set of outcomes. The outcomes were categorized in four areas and the project met or exceeded all of them.

Coordination
Improve business outreach and assessment of workforce needs through coordinated client management among WDBs and economic developers.

New Demand-Driven Tools
Implement use of Salesforce tools

Job Seeker Services/Placement/Hiring
Provide high-quality, efficient and timely placement/matching of job seekers to available opportunities at partner businesses.

Industry Partnerships/Career Pathways
Develop and expand Industry Partnerships (to coordinate business skill/workforce needs, develop scalable training initiatives, and develop new curricula).

Various strategies and related reports were developed within Salesforce to document the activity for the first three categories. Category four activities were captured in the quarterly reports from the Workforce Development Boards. The table below is excerpted from the IMPAQ Evaluation report.

Process for Managing Activities or Funds
The statewide comprehensive Skills Wisconsin project used a range of online tools that included:

- Salesforce as mentioned previously as the collaborative cloud computing system to document and share business engagement activities and services. This included connected apps such as Salesforce for Outlook and Ebsta to allow users to sync emails into Salesforce.
- Webinar tools for training such as JoinMe, GoToWebinar, and YouTube to share recordings.
- Dropbox for sharing files across all Workforce Development Areas with folders for the Collabor8 Summits, the Wisconsin Business Solutions Training, and Salesforce documents.
- Doodle for planning statewide collaborative meetings.
- Eventbrite for registrations for the Collabor8 Summits and the Wisconsin Business Solutions Training with processes in place to collect fees to sustain these activities.
- SurveyMonkey for post summit and training surveys.

Table 1 Performance Measures (from IMPAQ Evaluation Report)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of businesses served</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>87,069</td>
<td>1583%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff trained in the demand-driven model</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>182%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employer profiles</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>44,151</td>
<td>803%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of new training curricula created</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of industry partnerships</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of job seekers trained</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>823</td>
<td>374%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of job seekers served</td>
<td>7,000</td>
<td>12,455</td>
<td>178%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of hires due to enhanced relationships</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>1,843</td>
<td>184%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of times Salesforce is accessed</td>
<td>66,000</td>
<td>265,159</td>
<td>402%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The U.S. Department of Labor required each Workforce Innovation Fund grantee to implement an independent evaluation of its grant program as a condition of the award. These evaluations are intended to generate new, stronger evidence on the effectiveness of innovative changes to the workforce system. The WDB of South Central Wisconsin, the lead WDB for Skills Wisconsin, contracted with IMPAQ International, LLC (IMPAQ) to conduct an independent evaluation of the consortium’s program.

The evaluation of Skills Wisconsin consisted of three components: a process study on how implementation of Salesforce affected workforce development stakeholders, an impact evaluation on the effects of Salesforce implementation on job seekers, and analysis of quantitative outcomes related to Skills Wisconsin implementation. The full report is available online at www.wdbscw.org.

I think it’s prompted or forced more collaboration. You know if you’re going to share an account management system all of a sudden you have to be on the same page. There are protocols, there’s dialogue, there’s training, and it brings anybody whose entering data into that system together. So it kind of forces that collaboration at a very grassroots level. — Workforce Professional

[The Skills Wisconsin Salesforce Platform] is the first time I ever saw that focused an effort for everybody to share [and] to make sure that we knew where one another had been and who we’d talk to and what we were doing. So if one of us had been to company X on Monday that’s the first time I ever saw that someone might have a chance to know on Tuesday that you might not want to go back there and have the same conversation. — Workforce Professional