

Workforce & Economic Development Strategic Plan

Who we are: The Postsecondary Education and Workforce Development Group at WestEd is focused on strengthening the role of postsecondary education and training in workforce and economic development, improving student access and outcomes in postsecondary education, and increasing economic mobility for low income families and communities. Some of our lines of work include assistance with regional and intersegmental planning to connect K12, higher education, workforce and adult education into coherent pathway systems, assistance for colleges on implementation of Guided Pathways and systems that increase student equity and outcomes, leading local & regional planning and conversations on the use of data to increase educational success and economic mobility, and development of large scale and local datasets and data tools to improve educational practice and student outcomes.

General Scope of Project: WestEd will partner with Las Positas College (LPC) to facilitate an economic and workforce development strategic plan. WestEd will provide facilitation, research and analysis (i.e., focus groups and interviews), strategy, and technical assistance to LPC from early January to March (pending on the project's start date) that results in a plan that LPC can use to guide its education, workforce, and economic planning goals. While the scope of work below is comprehensive and includes key components that WestEd believes will ensure LPC is off to a strong start, WestEd is also including additional optional considerations LPC may want to include.

Activities: WestEd proposes the following activities:

1. Vision and Goals: facilitation and synthesis of LPC's vision, goals, and strategy

WestEd proposes to first start by synthesizing LPC's vision and goals for economic development and workforce. For this process, WestEd proposes interviewing LPC's leadership group to synthesize a vision statement, key goals, and priorities of LPC. This process will consider individual goals of colleges and their alignment with LPC. Furthermore, during this phase, WestEd will consider relevant documents, reports, and research that can inform LPC's goals and strategy. WestEd will consult with LPC on the personnel that should be involved in this leadership group.

2. Economic Analysis and Profile: analysis of regional labor market conditions (i.e., industries, in-demand occupations, employment, etc.)

WestEd proposes to develop a LPC data profile by analyzing and synthesizing various labor market insights and performing an economic analysis of the region. The profile will be succinct but will be important to ensure that LPC staff have a comprehensive understanding of the region's economic profile. The economic analysis will consider key metrics such as in-demand industries, in-demand occupations, and employment related data such as unemployment rate, labor force participation, labor force demographics, and others. After developing the data profile, WestEd will consult with the leadership group to identify key metrics they may consider prioritizing and targeting for improvement. WestEd will synthesize patterns in the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the region's top occupations as a way to inform education and business stakeholders on the core competencies that need to be prioritized to prepare students for a dynamic labor market.

3. Employer Assessment: analysis and discussions with employers on employer engagement and activities

WestEd will facilitate data-driven insights on gaps the employer community believes exist within the region's education to workforce ecosystem. This assessment component will be crucial to inform LPC's strategic plan. WestEd will develop informed interview questions (or surveys) to be used during interviews or focus groups of employers. The questions will seek to assess employer insights into key concepts that are critical to build a coherent strategic plan. Through the interviews, WestEd will seek to understand the employer community's capacity to engage in workforce initiatives such as work-based learning, gaps in their understanding of related workforce initiatives, and opportunities for LPC to create a more responsive workforce and economic ecosystem. WestEd will also seek to understand LPC's ecosystem for employer engagement and consider recommendations to improve alignment between employers and the education community. Furthermore, local workforce boards play an important role in the workforce ecosystem. Thus, WestEd will seek to connect with local workforce boards in the region to understand how LPC is collaborating and how they can improve collaboration. WestEd will consult LPC to connect with approximately half-a-dozen businesses for interviews.

4. Roadmap to Vision and Recommendations: developing a roadmap and synthesizing recommendations

The process of developing a robust, region-wide economic and workforce development strategic plan, requires thoughtful stakeholder engagement, sound planning and research, and the ability to develop actionable recommendations that lead to an infrastructure and process where leaders can act on the plan.

In order to develop a purposeful and actionable roadmap to vision, WestEd will work closely with LPC staff to facilitate the strategic planning process. The strategic planning process will take into account findings from LPC, employers, and workforce stakeholders. Then, WestEd will engage with a representative group of stakeholders to design the vision and document the action plans, which will include short- and long-term goals. WestEd's process for developing the roadmap is highlighted below and the submitted report will include an analysis based on WestEd's approach and findings.

Establish Stakeholder Leadership Group. WestEd will propose organizing a Strategic Planning Committee consisting of personnel from LPC and other relevant stakeholders that meet in the beginning, middle, and end of the project on conference calls. WestEd will leverage this committee to not only share updates, progress, and initial findings, but to also serve as a thought partner as WestEd develops the final report. WestEd will consult with LPC on the personnel that should be involved in this leadership group. In previous efforts, WestEd has learned that such a group can help ensure staff fully understands the local context and that there is a clear understanding of the uniqueness of the region as the roadmap is developed.

Facilitate Strategy Discussions. Stakeholder engagement will be essential in developing an economic and workforce development strategic plan. WestEd will facilitate two strategy discussions to inform the roadmap to vision for LPC. Strategy discussions will be facilitated with LPC and employer representatives. The strategy discussions will focus specifically on the characteristics of a regionwide economic and workforce ecosystem that would entice stakeholders to be full participants and the tools they need to be successful in such a system.

Detailed protocols will be developed for each meeting and key themes and findings will be summarized and used to inform the roadmap to vision.

Final Product; report and strategic plan: After facilitating the vision and goals process, the strategy discussions, the economic analysis and profile, and the employer assessment, WestEd will synthesize the findings and draft an initial strategic planning document as a report that the leadership group can review and provide initial feedback. The final workforce and economic strategic plan will include findings from each category as well as recommendations and action steps LPC may consider for building a more comprehensive workforce ecosystem. WestEd will leverage its experience working with partners across the country developing systems that support economic mobility to review best practices and lessons learned that can be applied to LPC.

Anticipated Timeline: The support provided above is estimated from early January to March (~10-12 weeks) from the start of the contract. **The timeline is dependent on LPC's ability to provide WestEd access to information and staff it needs for its workforce and economic development analysis and the availability of those staff to schedule and confirm meetings** (i.e., interviews, discussions, etc.)

Additional Considerations (Optional): The activities above consider key components of WestEd's facilitation of a workforce and economic development plan based on CLPCCD's timeline and initial goals. However, WestEd's staff has the capacity to conduct additional analysis that strengthens the workforce and economic development strategic plan.

- **Recommendations and Summary:** In completing the workforce and economic strategic plan, WestEd can develop a section of the report with clear recommendations for LPC to consider improving their workforce and economic ecosystem based on research, best practices, and stakeholder interviews. WestEd will leverage its experience working with partners across the country developing systems that support career readiness to review best practices and lessons learned that can be applied to LPC's efforts.