

Workforce Prep abstract:

WORKFORCE PREPARATION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

We all know the context of workforce preparation needs for our county as we move into the next century. But it may be useful to remind ourselves of the components of that context and in the process ask ourselves some difficult questions.

Our unemployment rates are high. Can we expand and redesign our vocational education programs to increase the employability of our current and future workforce?

New welfare legislation requires many current welfare recipients to move in to the workforce. What do we need to do with our vocational education programs to improve their employability?

Although not often openly acknowledged, many employers move in to our area because of relatively cheap labor. Yet, data from state-wide and national surveys indicate that a primary factor in the business decision to locate is the skill level of the workforce. What do we need to do with our vocational education programs so that they help provide a workforce that will be more known for its skill than its cost?

One of the issues before this group is to consider whether we need to reformulate the questions above and/or whether there are other contextual questions that ought to be asked to help us design a study that will be of maximum utility to everyone here.

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