Gearing Up for the 2015 State Legislative Sessions

State Advocates Meeting
8 a.m.-4 p.m. September 25, 2014

Pre-Meeting Exercise

A large part of our meeting is dedicated to giving you an opportunity to share what happened during last year’s state legislative session, what you plan to work on in the 2015 session, and to seek feedback from other attendees on a specific issue you are facing related to the upcoming session.

Before the meeting, please prepare a 10-minute presentation to give at our meeting covering the topics listed below. If more than one person from your state is attending, please prepare ONE presentation for your state. We suggest involving other colleagues from your state who are not attending the meeting in your presentation prep.

After each presentation, a facilitator will guide the larger group in providing feedback, sharing suggestions based on their experience, and brainstorming possible solutions or next steps.

We ask that you prepare a short 1-page handout before the meeting. We are compiling the handouts to share with all attendees before the meeting. Please send us your handout by Monday, September 22. You are welcome to prepare a few PowerPoint slides but this is not required.

1. What happened during your state’s 2014 state legislative session? Please cover any or all of the following topics:
   - General state budget & economic climate
   - General political dynamics
   - Key budget decisions affecting education & workforce funding
   - Legislation passed that is either good or bad in helping industries & workers get the skills they need
   - Budget items or policies you championed & what was the outcome
   - Missed opportunities or things you would do differently
2. What are you planning for the 2015 state legislative session? Please cover any or all of the following topics:
   - Budget item that needs to be protected or increased
   - Legislation to be filed
   - Relationship-building with potentially new governor, state agency staff or legislators

3. What advice or feedback are you looking for from the meeting attendees? Possible topics could include:

   **Policy Areas:**
   - Policies that support sector partnerships among multiple employers within an industry and colleges, schools, labor, workforce agencies, community organizations and other community stakeholders that align training with the skills needed for that industry to grow and compete
   - Policies that promote career pathways that align adult basic education, job training, higher education and basic support systems so that workers can earn postsecondary credentials and get middle-skill jobs
   - Job-driven investments that prepare workers for middle-skill job openings in the labor market
   - Policies to measure the outcomes of workforce and education investments, and to align those programs with each other and the labor market

   **Messengers / Messaging:**
   - Employer involvement
   - Strategic communications (social and traditional media, key message development)
   - Making the case for investments in skills in a tough budget climate
   - Building policymaker support or cultivating legislator champions

   **Tactics**
   - Strengthening in-state coalition building with likely or unlikely allies
   - Building consensus with traditional partners or allies
   - Recovering from a loss (e.g., budget reduction, legislation did not pass, etc.)
   - What to do next after achieving a policy win (e.g., budget increase or new funding appropriated, legislation passed)
   - Keeping fellow colleagues from your state motivated and involved in joint advocacy work
   - How to influence implementation activities at the state agency level after budget or policy win