



**C.L. "BUTCH" OTTER
GOVERNOR**

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TASK FORCE ISSUES RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING IDAHO'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

(BOISE) - An employer-driven task force appointed by Governor C.L. "Butch" Otter to study how Idaho can do a better job of developing the educated, skilled workforce that businesses need is calling for more State investment in training programs, more engagement by industry and more focus on proven strategies. The 17-member Workforce Development Task Force delivered a report with nine recommendations to Governor Otter by a July 1 deadline that was aimed at ensuring the findings can inform budget decisions and legislative proposals for the coming year. The full report can be found [here](#).

"The business leaders, education experts, legislators and staff who contributed their time and energies to this effort deserve our thanks for thoroughly examining our existing programs and processes, pulling together information on best practices from around the nation, and developing a game plan for real progress," Governor Otter said. "We already are moving forward on these recommendations, but we will need the continuing commitment of everyone involved to make the changes necessary for sustaining Idaho's economic growth."

The Task Force was led by Dr. David Hill, a physicist, State Board of Education member and retired senior executive at the Idaho National Laboratory; and Brian Whitlock, president and CEO of the Idaho Hospital Association. Task Force members included aerospace, advanced manufacturing, health care, high-tech, construction, natural resources, food processing, agribusiness and energy employers, as well as representatives from Idaho's K-12, community college and university career and technical education programs.

"I learned a lot from this process, not the least of which was the degree to which government, education and businesses must work together more effectively to achieve our shared goals," said Hill, who also serves on Governor Otter's Higher Education Task Force. "There is great willingness on all sides to address this issue head-on. That will require engaging with employers and potential employees early and often in order to meet a growing demand for people who are workplace-ready, trained and prepared to take on our high-demand jobs."

The Task Force identified four major areas of focus for its research and recommendations - industry, education and government partnerships; capacity building; career advising; and communications. From those areas, the Task Force developed nine recommendations for the Governor and the Workforce Development Council, along with associated short-term and long-term actions and anticipated outcomes.

1. **Workforce Development Council and Industry Partnerships** – Increase the role and responsibilities of an industry-driven Workforce Development Council to champion the development and implementation of a statewide, strategic workforce development plan that meets industries’ needs today and tomorrow.
2. **Workforce Development Training Fund** – Establish a sustainable funding mechanism for the Workforce Development Training Fund.
3. **Public Engagement** – Develop and implement a comprehensive statewide public engagement initiative utilizing technology and other engagement strategies to increase awareness of career opportunities for all Idahoans.
4. **Connecting Education to Careers** – Idaho’s K-through-Career education system should value and support all pathways for students to achieve education, training and workforce skills that align to their career aspirations.
5. **Workforce Training Centers and Adult Training Support** – Enhance support for Idaho’s six Workforce Training Centers and the individuals they serve with short-term, industry-focused training.
6. **Strengthen Career Advising** – Ensure that there is equity and access for all Idaho students to occupational pathways by establishing stronger requirements for the secondary education system in deploying college and career advising.
7. **Workforce Readiness** – Incentivize Idaho school districts to incorporate workforce readiness skills throughout secondary curricula.
8. **Apprenticeships** – Continue the development of apprenticeship programs throughout the state.
9. **Expand Career and Technical Education Programs** – Strengthen Idaho’s talent pipeline by expanding CTE (career and technical education) programs at the secondary and post-secondary levels.

As a next step, the Governor will soon be appointing a transition team to develop a model for reorganizing the Workforce Development Council (WDC). The goal is to enable the WDC, by centralizing and increasing its authority, to “effectively coordinate industry-driven workforce development efforts among state agencies and educational institutions.”

Additional steps will include drafting a new executive order reflecting the organizational changes developed by the transition team, reviewing agency budget requests for the next fiscal year related to workforce development and career and technical education. Legislation also will be drafted for consideration by the 2018 session of the Idaho Legislature to make the WDC and Workforce Development Training Fund more flexible and aligned with needs identified by the Task Force.

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