



Workforce Development Boards: What They Are and What SHRM Members Should Know

What is a workforce development board? Workforce development boards (WDBs) are local and state bodies that help shape how workforce training and employment services are delivered in communities. They are part of the public workforce system, a national network that supports economic growth by connecting job seekers with employers.

What do WDBs actually do? WDBs create strategic workforce plans, direct federal workforce funds, and guide local training programs based on real-time labor market data. They partner with employers to ensure talent pipelines are aligned with business needs, especially in high-demand industries. WDBs also support local job centers, which offer career services to job seekers and help employers meet hiring goals.

Who serves on WDBs? Each WDB is composed of leaders from business, education, labor, and government. Often, more than 50% of board members come from the private sector, ensuring that employer voices drive workforce investments. Other members include representatives of community colleges, training providers, elected officials, and economic development organizations.

Why should SHRM Members consider serving on a WDB? WDBs directly influence how local talent is trained and prepared for the workforce. SHRM Members bring essential expertise in hiring, workforce trends, and skills development, making them invaluable contributors to these strategic conversations. Serving on a WDB offers a unique chance to shape the talent ecosystem in your region.

What are the benefits of serving on a WDB? Serving on a WDB gives SHRM Members a seat at the table where workforce decisions are made, helping align training investments with real hiring needs. It's a strategic leadership opportunity that raises your professional visibility and expands your influence on regional economic priorities.

You'll build valuable cross-sector relationships with business, education, and civic leaders; gain deeper insights into local labor market trends; and uncover new resources to support your organization's talent strategy. Most importantly, it's a chance to make a measurable difference in how your community develops and retains skilled workers.