

# Digest of A Review of The Coordination of Utah's Employment and Training Programs

For nearly twenty years one group after another has proposed ways to streamline Utah's numerous employment, training, and vocational education programs in order to reduce the duplication of services and to make the system more responsive to the needs of its customers. None of these efforts have been successful because they did not address the fundamental conflicts regarding power and politics that cause the coordination problems. There are a number of interagency conflicts over the role of each agency and over who has authority to oversee the state's employment and training activities. Because of these conflicts, agencies are more concerned about protecting their agency's independence than they are about creating the "*coherent, integrated and coordinated approach*" to employment and training which is envisioned by the federal Job Training Partnership Act.

We believe that a strategic planning process for work force development would be the best way to improve the coordination of the state's many employment and training programs. This would require that the governor, with the support of the Legislature, appoint a task force of senior level government and business leaders to resolve the important strategic issues facing the states work force development system. We recommend that they follow a process similar to the one used by a number of other states which have addressed this same issue. We also recommend that the State Legislature reevaluate the way it addresses programs, policies, and budgets relating to work force development. They should either create a single committee for employment and training or find a way to coordinate the efforts of the various committees that currently oversee the different employment and training programs.

The specific findings of this report include:

**The Need for Better Coordination Is Widely Recognized.** At both the state and federal level, it is widely recognized that employment and training issues have not been addressed in a very coherent manner. Both the federal and state governments have created one employment and training program after another without adequately addressing how they should relate to similar programs which already exist. This has resulted in a fragmented and complex set of employment and training programs which are cumbersome to those who administer them and to the individuals and businesses which try to obtain services from them. As a result, several agencies provide similar services to overlapping client populations. In addition, there is no consistent way of evaluating how well any of these programs are accomplishing their goals.



**The JTCC Faces Obstacles to Interagency Coordination.** Although the Job Training Coordinating Council has put forth a great effort to identify and resolve the problems associated with a fragmented and duplicative work force development system, we are concerned that their solutions are aimed more at the symptoms than at the cause of the problem. We believe more attention needs to be given to resolving the natural conflicts between agencies which have made it difficult for them to integrate the delivery of services. These interagency conflicts have resulted in "turfism" and have made it difficult for agencies to agree on the role and authority of the Job Training Coordination Council and the local Private Industry Councils. Until these fundamental governance issues are resolved, we believe the current coordination efforts of the Job Training Coordination Council will provide only a modest improvement in interagency coordination.

**Utah Needs a Strategic Plan for Work Force Development.** If the Legislature and the governor want an integrated, coherent and coordinated approach to providing businesses and individuals with the employment and training services they need, we recommend that they sponsor a strategic planning process which will clarify the state's overall goals and objectives for work force development and which will resolve the issues regarding the role of each agency and who should be given the authority to see that the state's work force development goals are achieved. We believe that this is the best way to resolve the interagency conflicts which have been the main obstacle to coordination in the past.