

In the fall of 2020, the Ventura County Work-Based Learning Consortium was established to develop a collaborative regional approach to work-based learning.

MISSION: What is the Ventura County Work Based Learning Consortium?

The Ventura County Work Based Learning Consortium is a cross-sector working group of employers, educators, community-based organizations (CBOs), government, and labor, that collaborates to:

- develop a regional vision for Work Based Learning and
- create sustainable aligned systems for building and strengthening regional career pathways that meet the needs of Ventura County employers and jobseekers.

The Ventura County Work Based Learning Consortium is the “umbrella” working group of the sector working groups of the WDB.

STRATEGIES the Consortium Uses to Achieve the Mission

- Conduct research to understand current and future workforce needs
- Share best practices and resources
- Conduct long-term regional planning
- Build relationships and a collaborative social network
- Align definitions and create a common terminology
- Align efforts in order to reduce duplication and silos
- Engage employers
- Identify and jointly apply for funding
- Develop programs along the entire work-based learning continuum
- Expand the network of existing WBL experiences for students and job seekers

How we Work:

- The Consortium is facilitated by the Workforce Development Board
- Meet every two months on the 3rd Wednesday
- Meeting agendas are shared three calendar days in advance.
- Standing agenda items include:
 - Networking
 - Progress on Goals
 - Collaborative Work on Work Plan
 - Opportunities for Collaboration
 - Upcoming funding opportunities?
 - Is anything being duplicated? Any silos we may address?
 - Who needs help? Group trouble shooting
 - Announcements

Consortium Membership Criteria:

Consortium members are working to coordinate, implement and resource regional work-based learning programs along the work-based learning continuum. Members must:

- Be part of an entity in Ventura County
- Not have a product or service to sell to consortium members
- Be vetted by the existing group
- **Visitors and subject matter experts can attend by invite*
- **A larger regional meeting will take annually*

Work Based Learning Continuum¹ Definition

A career educational strategy that includes the spectrum of programs that expose, educate, train Learners for industry-relevant skills and programs that train and upskill people already in the workforce. This includes: CTE classes in high school that expose youth to various careers and skills; internships; technical certificates at a community college; apprenticeship; and upskilling and professional development in the workplace. Work Based Learning aligns classroom and workplace learning by providing students/workers with real-life work experiences connected to employers. During work Based Learning Continuum programs, Learners apply academic, technical, and soft-skills to enhance employability and knowledge. **Providers could include educational entities, community-based organizations, training providers, & employers*

What Is Work-Based Learning And Why Does It Matter?

Work based learning includes all learning that is connected to real-world skills, industry and employers. It is essential because it provides students with exposure to careers and industry professionals and connects employers with various employee pipelines and the education needed to upskill and develop existing employees. People of all ages, experience levels, and backgrounds benefit from work-based learning: from students and young adults who are just beginning their careers to adult jobseekers and people with many years of experience who need to learn new skills. Unfortunately, work-based learning programs are typically explained and defined based on the needs of students or employers and not as a comprehensive and complex collaborative that must meet the needs of all stakeholders in order to be effective. This narrow definition leaves gaps that are not filled by omission. If you narrowly define something you inadvertently maintain, grow, and feed the existing gaps. Work based learning experiences need to be collaboratively designed by industry, educators, and job seekers to ensure that opportunities meet the needs of employers and future job seekers.

2022 WORKPLAN of the Ventura County Work Based Learning Consortium

Goal 1: Develop a robust ICT career pathway from K-12 through Incumbent workers

Strategy: Conduct an Education and Training Gap Analysis from K-12 through Incumbent worker

- Visually map offerings from K-12 through career

Strategy: Engage employers to hire trainees and provide WBL to students

- Work with the Digital Upskilling Initiative to conduct LMI analysis and identify gaps between job seeker supply and employer demand
- Develop a menu of engagement opportunities for employers

Goal 2: Reduce duplication of efforts by identifying overlapping efforts and streamlining

- Identify overlapping ICT initiatives and efforts
- Develop ways to reduce duplication and silos (E.g.: hold joint Advisory Committee meetings)

Goal 3: Increase knowledge of the WBL network in Ventura County

Strategy: Teach each other about existing programs, resources, and tools.