



## **Branding, Communications and Outreach Initiative Maryland Workforce Investment System**

### **Stakeholder Briefing Package**

#### **What is the Branding, Communications and Outreach initiative?**

The Branding, Communications and Outreach (BCO) initiative is a collaborative process between state and local workforce investment system stakeholders to develop strategies and tools that help position the importance of our work to customers, funders and partners. The first phase of the project is underway and runs through October 12, 2012.

#### **Who is involved in the BCO initiative?**

The initiative is being funded by the Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulations (DLLR) with a Taskforce group comprised of both local and state representatives. Members of the Taskforce are noted below.

- **Barbara Kaufmann** | Director, Division of Workforce Services Department of Economic Development, Montgomery County
- **Bruce England** | Executive Director, Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN), Inc., Susquehanna Region (Cecil and Harford Counties)
- **George Littrell III, CRPC®** | Vice President, Financial Advisor Morgan Stanley Smith Barney
- **Kym Nelson** | Chief of Staff, Office of the Secretary
- **Ileana O' Brien** | Special Projects Manager, Office of the Secretary
- **Paulette Francois** | DWDAL Assistant Secretary
- **Ellen Flowers-Fields** | DWDAL Deputy Assistant Secretary
- **Elizabeth Williams** | DWDAL Chief Operating Officer
- **Latesa Thomas** | DLLR Acting Chief of Procurement
- **Sheree Finley** | Director, DWDAL Workforce Development
- **Susan Kaliush** | DWDAL Communications & Outreach Manager
- **Crystal Terrell Jewette** | DWDAL Branding Project Manager
- **Steve Gallison** | Manager, DWDAL Business Services, Staff Development, Early Intervention & Professional Outplacement Assistance Center (POAC) Director
- **Stephen Harrison** | Labor Exchange Administrator (LEA), Anne Arundel County

### **Selected Vendor:**

The selected vendor for the BCO initiative is Full Capacity Marketing, Inc. (FCM). FCM has developed highly effective branding, communications and outreach systems at the state and local level of the workforce investment system to help organizations achieve market position—the brands are recognized, understood and valued. FCM's philosophy is an all-inclusive approach with local workforce investment areas having input upfront into the priorities, tools and systems that will help them be successful in the field. FCM is a well respected company that works across the country with workforce system stakeholders. More information on FCM may be found at [www.FullCapacityMarketing.com](http://www.FullCapacityMarketing.com).

### **Why is the initiative being undertaken now?**

Despite strong and historic bipartisan support, the fate of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is currently being heavily debated in Congress and is "front and center" in the news media. Critics from *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Times*, along with key elected officials continue to report that 1) WIA programs are wasteful and don't fill any critical need in the modern economy; 2) in spite of high unemployment, there is little use of the One-Stop Career Centers; and 3) job seekers rely on the Internet and other private sector companies that replicate federal employment and training services.

Yet, over the past two years, the workforce system has provided employment and training services to more than 8.5 million job seekers; more than half (4.3 million) found jobs through the system during that time. In order to protect taxpayers, Workforce Investment Boards have done more and more with less and less. Since 2008, enrollment in WIA programs has increased by 234 percent, while funding has remained virtually unchanged. If workforce development is so important to America's recovery, why is funding being cut? One of the critical challenges centers on the lack of thoughtful and research-based branding, marketing and communications strategies among the multiple stakeholders of the workforce system.

The intent of the project is to develop strategies and tools that help all stakeholders position the importance of the work that is accomplished collectively every day in Maryland's 12 local workforce investment areas. It is imperative that Maryland's workforce system find strategic ways to collectively and consistently demonstrate its value and relevancy to funders, stakeholders and customers.

### **What are the phases of the project?**

**Phase 1:** In the first phase of the project, FCM will conduct market research to determine baseline perceptions of the workforce investment system among various customer groups and stakeholders. This objective data will be used to drive discussions among the Taskforce and local areas.

**Phase 2:** FCM will provide recommendations for a brand strategy to help collectively position the importance of the work that is accomplished in Maryland's 12 local workforce investment areas.

**Phase 3:** FCM will develop a communications and outreach plan, and deliver recommendations for a statewide campaign to improve awareness of the workforce investment system.

**Phase 4:** FCM will develop and deliver capacity-building communication tools and Webinars to support stakeholders in implementation of the plan and campaign.

## **How does your voice get heard?**

FCM has created several tools that provide a two-way communication system, as we move through the process of designing strategies and tools to support Maryland's workforce investment system.

**Initiative Wiki** – a wiki is a collaborative online workspace in which documents are posted and discussions occur among members. FCM is developing a customized wiki for the project, and you will be invited to become a member.

**Kickoff Webinar** – a kickoff webinar was held 5/11/12 at 11:00 am EST. The Webinar was recorded and posted on the wiki.

**LWIA Interviews** – FCM will be scheduling detailed interviews with the local workforce investment areas' executive directors. FCM will provide a detailed list of topics that will be discussed during that interview.

Questions about the initiative may be directed to BCO Project Manager, Crystal Terrell at [cterrell@dhr.state.md.us](mailto:cterrell@dhr.state.md.us) or Project Consultant, Celina Shands Gradijan at [celina@fullcapacitymarketing.com](mailto:celina@fullcapacitymarketing.com).