



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BUSINESS U FUNDS NATIONAL STUDY FOR WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM ***Focus on current state of business engagement in nation***

Washington, DC — In June 2016, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education released final regulations that define and measure the new indicator of “Effectiveness in Serving Employers,” a significant part of the [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#) (WIOA), signed into law by President Obama in July 2014. An important point within the [Joint Final Rule](#) is that businesses will continue to “inform and guide the workforce system, ensuring that services are well aligned with their workforce needs.

This demand-side focus provides an expanded role with respect to business engagement for the 550+ Workforce Development Boards (WDB) that make employment and training investments for job seekers, employers and youth that are delivered through 3,000+ American Job Centers across the nation.

Business U CEO/Co-founder, Dr. Christine Bosworth talks about these expanded roles, “WIOA puts a focus on: 1) regional coordination with sector strategies and initiatives, as well as delivery of workforce services based on data (e.g., labor market information) to inform decision making and workforce investments; 2) greater alignment with economic development and education to drive a collective response to labor market challenges; and 3) prioritization of an employercentric system to reinforce business services. Resulting in key opportunities to strategically strengthen business engagement practices and meaningful relationships and partnerships nationally—to not only learn the language of business, but gain a deeper understanding of its market-responsive cycles so that employer needs are anticipated and met, even when their needs fall outside the realm of workforce development programs and funding sources.”

These key opportunities are emphasized monthly at Business U’s [Business Engagement Community of Practice \(CoP\)](#), a peer-to-peer learning consortium with employer-facing practitioners in the workforce system. Launched in January 2016, Business U conducts CoP webinars in which members are asked to respond to various poll questions regarding their business engagement practices.

Business U Co-founder, Celina Shands said, “Over the past eight months, the CoP poll results indicate significant challenges to build credible transformational relationships with business and industry, a core component of being successful with business engagement. Gathering and analyzing these initial poll trends, Business U seeks to find out the current state of the workforce development system and if CoP poll results hold true for the majority of the workforce system across the nation.”

The National Study will serve to identify key barriers and gaps in the technical skills business-facing staff need to be market responsive so they can better engage business and industry to effectively serve WIOA’s dual customer, the employer and jobseeker. Organizations that qualify to participate in the study are state or local workforce development boards, contractors that provide services for an American Job Center, or a mandated/recommended partner of the workforce development system.

Participating organizations will receive a copy of the study including recommendations in the final report. Additionally, each state that engages at least 50 percent of its local workforce development boards, contractors and partners in participating will receive a state-specific customized report to help set benchmarks. To learn more or participate in the study, read [Business U’s National Study Brief](#).

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Business U is the only institutionally accredited organization in the nation that focuses on business engagement within three vertical markets including workforce, education, and economic development. Business U earned its institutional accreditation status with the [International Association for Continuing Education and Training \(IACET\)](#), and in doing so joined an elite group of educators dedicated to quality in continuing education and training to ensure our customers' professional development initiatives align with the ANSI/IACET Standard to maximize business engagement. Through professional development, business engagement strategic plans and CRM technology, Business U elevates organizations to better engage business and industry resulting in economic growth and jobseeker and student success. More at www.Business-U.net

