



# Golden Sierra Workforce Development Board

Three-Year Strategic Plan

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Prepared by The NiVACK Group



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## Executive Summary

The Golden Sierra Workforce Development (GSWDB) is the Governor's designated workforce development board for Placer, El Dorado, and Alpine Counties under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA). Serving approximately 630,000 residents, GSWDB aids system partners by providing direction on how best to assist businesses develop talent pipelines and jobseekers by acquiring the education, credentials, and skills to obtain work in careers that pay a living wage.

The organization is a private sector-led, public Board, appointed by the Chief Local Elected Officials who represent their respective counties on the Golden Sierra Governing Body. Business members represent industry leaders in valued sectors such as healthcare, manufacturing, IT, insurance, and construction. Public sector members represent youth, education, social service, labor, government, and economic development agencies.

The GSWDB engaged The NiVACK Group to facilitate a comprehensive strategic planning process to define its direction and priorities for the next three years. This plan represents the collective insights, experience, and aspirations of the Board and its partners, developed through a series of structured and engaging workshops.

The result is a focused set of Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) that will guide GSWDB in transforming from a compliance-driven organization to one that delivers measurable strategic impact across the region, including.

- Improved accessibility of workforce services.
- Expanded employer partnerships.
- Increased visibility of the Board as a strategic convener.

The updated mission and vision emphasize collaboration, accessibility, and economic growth through workforce development.

Over the next three years, GSWDB will focus on three strategic priorities:

1. **Employer Engagement:** Strengthen partnerships with industry to ensure workforce programs align with real-world needs.
2. **System Coordination and Accessibility:** Build a coordinated, accessible workforce ecosystem that serves employers, job seekers, and training providers equitably.

3. **Outreach and Awareness:** Increase understanding of the membership, visibility, stakeholder engagement, and Board member participation thereby enhancing the GSWDB's regional influence.

These goals position GSWDB to drive greater alignment, foster innovation, and enhance economic opportunity throughout its service area.

To ensure execution of this Strategic Plan, the GSWDB will review progress on a regular basis, and at minimum, update the plan annually, if required.

# Methodologies Used

GSWDB's strategic planning process was guided by the principles of collaboration, inclusion, and evidence-based decision-making.

The strategic planning process was intentionally designed to be **inclusive, data-informed, and action-oriented**, incorporating the following methodologies:

1. **Document Review and Context Setting**

Existing materials, such as the Board Member Playbook, prior strategic documents, and regulatory requirements, were reviewed to establish a foundation of understanding.

2. **Stakeholder Engagement**

Workshops included interactive sessions with Board members, staff, and key partners to gather diverse perspectives and insights into challenges, opportunities, and aspirations.

3. **SWOT Analysis**

A structured SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) exercise was conducted to assess internal capabilities and external dynamics affecting GSWDB's effectiveness.

4. **OKR Development Framework**

The OKR (Objectives and Key Results) methodology was used to translate strategic intent into measurable outcomes. Each objective defines a clear direction, while key results provide quantifiable metrics to track progress.

5. **Strategic Design Sprints**

Cross-functional teams participated in "strategy sprints", during Board workshops, to identify actionable initiatives tied to the OKRs, ensuring each goal is supported by tangible strategies and resource plans.

6. **Implementation Planning**

The final phase focused on sequencing activities, assigning ownership, and defining time-bound milestones to ensure accountability and execution readiness.

# Findings and Insights

## Current Board Structure and Activities

### Board Structure

- **Leadership:**
  - *Chair:* Rick Larkey
  - *Vice Chair:* Rana Ghadban
- **Membership:**

The Board is composed of diverse representatives from business, education, labor, and community organizations, reflecting the region's varied economic and social landscape.
- **Meeting Cadence:**

The Board meets bi-monthly (six times per year), providing consistent oversight and decision-making.
- **Subcommittees:**

Currently, the Board does not operate through formal subcommittees, encouraging unified governance and collective accountability.

### Primary Activities

- **Regulatory Compliance:**

Oversight of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) compliance and performance measures.
- **Budget and Financial Approvals:**

Review and approval of budgets to ensure strategic and efficient allocation of resources.
- **Performance Negotiations:**

Collaborating with the Agency to review and approve performance targets under WIOA Title I.
- **Information Sharing and Collaboration:**

Facilitating partnerships and communication among regional stakeholders to strengthen workforce outcomes.

The strategic planning workshops revealed that while GSWDB has achieved strong compliance and operational consistency, opportunities exist to expand its **strategic impact and visibility**.

## Key Findings

These findings highlight the Board's transition opportunity, from a compliance-oriented body to one that actively shapes regional workforce policy and outcomes.

- The Board and Agency demonstrate strong regulatory performance and effective compliance management.
- Members bring **diverse expertise** and community connections that are underutilized.
- There is a shared desire to **move from compliance to strategic leadership** within the regional workforce ecosystem.
- Stakeholders value GSWDB's convening power and believe it can play a more proactive role in **shaping workforce policy and coordination**.

## Key Challenges

- Limited strategic focus and time for forward-looking discussions.
- Varying levels of member engagement and unclear understanding of Board roles.
- Communication gaps between staff, Board members, and partners.
- Resource constraints that limit capacity for innovation and outreach.
- Shifts in federal and state funding priorities that create uncertainty.

## SWOT Analysis

While strong partnerships and compliance provide a solid foundation, limited strategic focus and outreach represent the greatest barriers to realizing GSWDB's full regional potential.

Strengths	Weaknesses
• Diverse expertise among Board members	• Limited strategic focus beyond compliance
• Strong partnerships and collaboration	• Low member engagement in initiatives



Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proven compliance and performance record</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear roles and purpose for some members</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nimble and responsive agency structure</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication gaps and limited outreach</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborative relationships with stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resource and funding constraints</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordination with regional and state initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federal and state funding changes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expansion of strategic partnerships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing or overlapping organizations</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved talent pipeline management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time constraints of volunteer Board members</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pursuit of new grant and funding opportunities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy shifts impacting workforce programs</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhanced communication and community engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redundant efforts or misalignment across agencies</li> </ul>

## Mission and Vision

The Mission and Vision were created over the course of multiple face-to-face workshops, with full Board participation, and an Ad-Hoc committee meeting to refine the final options.

### Mission

*The Golden Sierra Workforce Development Board convenes industry leaders and key partners to provide strategic oversight, policy, and regional coordination to drive positive outcomes for employers and job seekers.*

This mission underscores GSWDB's central role as a **connector and catalyst**, aligning workforce, education, and economic development systems to strengthen both business competitiveness and individual opportunity.

### Vision

*A collaborative and accessible workforce system creating pathways to economic growth within our communities.*

The vision paints a clear picture of the future GSWDB seeks to create:

- **Collaboration:** Where partners align around shared goals and coordinated strategies.
- **Accessibility:** Where residents and employers can easily navigate and benefit from workforce programs.
- **Growth-orientation:** Where the region's talent and businesses thrive together in a sustainable, inclusive economy.

### Strategic Intent

The next three years will represent an expansion from a **compliance focus to strategic leadership**. GSWDB aims to become a recognized regional force that aligns public and private efforts, maximizes federal and state investments, and helps communities thrive through equitable access to opportunity.

This transformation will be anchored by clear priorities, measurable results, and active collaboration with local partners, education providers, and industry.

# Strategic Goals and 3-Year Objectives & Key Results (OKRs)

## Transition from Vision to Strategic Goals and OKRs

To turn our vision into measurable action, the GSWDB has identified three strategic priorities that define where the organization will focus its energy and resources over the next three years.

Each priority reflects the most critical opportunities identified during the Board's workshops and analysis, representing the shift from operational oversight to strategic leadership.

These priorities are expressed through a clear set of **Objectives and Key Results (OKRs)** that translate intent into measurable outcomes, ensuring that every initiative directly contributes to GSWDB's mission of driving economic growth and opportunity across the region.

## Why OKRs Matter

The adoption of the **Objectives and Key Results (OKR)** framework enables the GSWDB to move beyond compliance toward measurable strategic impact.

By clearly defining what success looks like and how it will be measured, OKRs create shared accountability across Board members, staff, and partners.

This structure ensures focus on the outcomes that matter most, improving employer engagement, system accessibility, and community awareness, while allowing flexibility to adapt as workforce needs evolve over time.

## Strategic Priority 1: Employer Engagement

### Objective:

Strengthen collaboration with employers and community partners to align training programs with real workforce needs.

### Why It Matters:

Because aligning workforce programs with actual employer demand ensures that job seekers are trained for high-value, in-demand careers, strengthening both business competitiveness and regional economic growth.

### Key Results:

1. **By TBD:** Utilize Agency staff to survey all Board members to understand their individual contributions to GSWDB's mission and identify existing employer linkages.
2. **By TBD:** Identify and engage **community partners** (e.g., Valley Vision, chambers of commerce, industry groups) that already possess employer-needs data to prevent duplication of effort.
3. **By TBD:** Conduct and / or **employer surveys** to identify key industry skill gaps and workforce challenges.
4. **By TBD:** Develop an **actionable employer engagement strategy** informed by survey and partner data.
5. **By TBD:** Launch or strengthen at least **three sector-based workforce partnerships** (e.g., healthcare, advanced manufacturing, green technologies).

### Intended Outcomes:

- Increased employer participation in workforce planning.
- Data-driven alignment between employer needs and workforce training investments.
- Enhanced visibility of GSWDB as a convener of regional industry collaboration.

## Strategic Priority 2: System Coordination and Accessibility

### Objective:

Develop an integrated, living resource, a **dynamic asset map**, to connect job seekers, employers, educators, and workforce partners across the region.

### Why It Matters:

Because a coordinated and transparent system helps residents, employers, and partners easily navigate available resources, reduces duplication, and improves equitable access to workforce opportunities.

### Key Results:

1. **By TBD:** Create and populate the regional asset map using Agency and partner data.
2. **By TBD:** Collect, refine, and analyze usage data to identify patterns of engagement and unmet needs.

3. **By TBD:** Conduct a comprehensive review to identify system improvements, and re-evaluate gaps if necessary.
4. **By TBD:** Gather structured feedback from employers, job seekers, and training providers to enhance usability and accessibility.
5. **Ongoing:** Use findings to guide Board policy decisions and resource allocation.

### Intended Outcomes:

- Improved system visibility and ease of access for employers and job seekers.
- Coordinated regional approach to workforce development.
- Data-driven insights into system performance and equity of access.

## Strategic Priority 3: Outreach and Awareness

### Objective:

Increase internal Board engagement and external communications to strengthen GSWDB's presence, influence, and stakeholder relationships.

### Why It Matters:

Because expanding awareness and engagement amplifies GSWDB's impact, builds trust with partners, and ensures the Board's work is visible, understood, and supported across the community.

### Key Results:

1. **By TBD:** Engage a **PR or communications partner** to develop an external messaging and outreach plan.
2. **By TBD:** Successfully **execute the plan** developed by the PR company.
3. **By TBD:** Separate the **Agency and Workforce Board websites**, giving GSWDB its own distinct platform for visibility and branding.
4. **By TBD:** **Create and publish Board member biographies** to personalize and highlight expertise.
5. **By TBD:** Implement an **enhanced onboarding program** for new Board members, including peer mentorship assignments.
6. **By TBD:** Launch **Board Member Roundtables** to facilitate peer exchange, identify systemic challenges, and surface new opportunities for collaboration.

7. **By TBD:** Publish quarterly partner **success stories and impact updates** through the GSWDB website and community newsletters that enhance the work of the board members' partnerships and organizations.

#### Intended Outcomes:

- Greater Board member engagement and retention.
- Stronger public awareness of GSWDB's role and achievements.
- Enhanced credibility and influence with regional partners, employers, and funders.

# Implementation Plan and Strategies

The Implementation Plan defines the specific actions, owners, and timelines for delivering on GSWDB's OKRs. Each Sub-Committee will report quarterly progress to the full Board.

## Strategic Priority 1: Employer Engagement

### Owner:

Employer Engagement Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee

### Objective:

Strengthen collaboration with employers and community partners to align training programs with real workforce needs.

Key Results	Strategies	Timeline	KPI's	Dependencies, Obstacles & Risks
1. Utilize Agency staff to survey all Board members to understand their individual contributions to GSWDB's mission and identify existing employer linkages.	Create and agree on survey questions.	TBD	Complete survey by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency Staffing</li> </ul>
	Email Board members list of questions.	TBD	Email Board by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency Staffing</li> </ul>
	Report back to Board.	TBD	Report to Board by due date	
2. Identify and engage community partners (e.g., Valley Vision, chambers of commerce, industry groups) that already possess employer-needs data to prevent duplication of effort.	Create and agree on list of Community Partners.	TBD	Create list by due date	
	Email Board members list of partners.	TBD	Email list to partners by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency Staffing</li> </ul>
	Report back to Board to review and approve list.	TBD	Report to Board by due date	

3. Conduct and / or review employer surveys to identify key industry skill gaps and workforce challenges.	Create an employer skill gaps survey.	TBD	Create survey by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency Staffing</li> </ul>
	Mail survey to employer participants	TBD	Send survey by due date	
4. Develop an actionable employer engagement strategy informed by survey and partner data.	Develop strategy	TBD	Strategy complete by due date	
5. Launch and / or strengthen at least three sector-based workforce partnerships (e.g., healthcare, advanced manufacturing, green technologies).	Develop and launch workforce partnerships.	TBD	Three partnerships launched by due date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency Staffing</li> <li>Funding</li> </ul>



## Strategic Priority 2: System Coordination and Accessibility

Owner:

System Coordination Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee

Objective:

Develop an integrated, living resource, a **dynamic asset map**, to connect job seekers, employers, educators, and workforce partners across the region.

Key Results	Strategies	Timeline	KPI's	Dependencies , Obstacles & Risks
1. Create and populate the regional asset map using Agency and partner data.	Work with Agency staff for resources to create map.	TBD	Create map by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency staffing</li> <li>Funding needed</li> <li>Data security &amp; information integrity</li> <li>Employer &amp; trainer non-participation</li> </ul>
	Share with Board.	TBD	Share with Board by due date	
2. Collect, refine, and analyze usage data to identify patterns of engagement and unmet needs.	Work with Agency staff to analyze data and create opportunity map.	TBD	Create opportunity map by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency staffing</li> <li>Funding needed</li> </ul>
3. Conduct a comprehensive review to identify opportunities for system improvements and re-evaluate gaps if necessary.	Collect usage data.	TBD	Collect data by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agency staff</li> <li>Agency system for analytics tracking</li> <li>Users buy-in and adoption</li> <li>User skill sets</li> </ul>
	Get information out and share it with partners.		Share with partners by due date	
	Review data analytics		Review data by due date	

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accuracy of reporting</li> </ul>
4. Gather structured feedback from employers, job seekers, and training providers to enhance usability and accessibility.	Create structured survey and interview platform to obtain useability and accessibilit y feedback.	TBD	Create survey by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency Staff</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>

## Strategic Priority 3: Outreach and Awareness

Owner:

Outreach and Awareness Ad-Hoc Sub-Committee

Objective:

Increase internal Board engagement and external communications to strengthen GSWDB's presence, influence, and stakeholder relationships.

Key Results	Strategies	Timeline	KPI's	Dependencies, Obstacles & Risks
1. Engage a PR or communications partner to develop an external messaging and outreach plan.	Work with Agency to access PR firm.	TBD	Engage PR firm by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PR Firm access</li> <li>• Funding</li> </ul>
2. Successfully execute the plan developed by the PR company.	TBD	TBD	Plan executed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unknown</li> </ul>
3. Separate the Agency and Workforce Board websites, giving GSWDB its own distinct platform	Identify the best way to either separate the Board website or create dedicated	TBD	Create new Board website or landing page by due date.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agency resources</li> <li>• Funding for website development</li> </ul>

for visibility and branding.	Board landing page in existing website.			
4. Create and publish Board member biographies to personalize and highlight expertise.	Create new template for Board member Bios and publish on website.	TBD	Template complete by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members submitting late / no submissions.</li> </ul>
	Create confidential contact list of and for Board members.	TBD	Contact list created by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
5. Implement an enhanced onboarding program for new Board members, including peer mentorship assignments.	Ask for Board volunteers to become mentors for new members.	TBD	ID volunteers by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members' time.</li> </ul>
	Create framework and collateral for volunteers to use.	TBD	Create framework and collateral by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board members' time.</li> </ul>
6. Launch Board Member Roundtables to facilitate peer exchange, identify systemic challenges, and surface new opportunities for collaboration.	Create script prompt for Board chair to ask for new ideas, and innovation.	TBD	Create script by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>None</li> </ul>
7. Publish quarterly success stories and impact updates through the GSWDB website	Create template to capture case studies and success stories (inc. photos, etc).	TBD	Create template by due date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Board member availability.</li> <li>Agency content.</li> </ul>

and community newsletters				
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## Summary and Next Steps

The 2025–2028 Strategic Plan provides a unified framework to guide the GSWDB toward greater strategic impact, visibility, and collaboration.

It defines a clear mission and vision, establishes measurable priorities, and creates a shared accountability structure across Board members, partners, and staff.

### Key Takeaways:

- **GSWDB’s Role:** Transitioning from purely compliance oversight to strategic convener of regional workforce development efforts.
- **Core Priorities:** Employer engagement, system coordination and accessibility, and outreach and awareness.
- **Execution Model:** Measurable OKRs tied to accountable owners and clear timelines.
- **Partnerships:** Collaboration with employers, education providers, and regional agencies to align resources and amplify impact.

### Next Steps:

1. Create ad-hoc sub-committees, assign OKR ownership across sub-committees and confirm reporting cadence.
2. Finalize timelines and success metrics for each key result.
3. Review progress bi-annually and update implementation plans based on performance data.
4. Publish and communicate progress through the new GSWDB website and annual report.

This plan marks a pivotal moment in GSWDB’s evolution, from fulfilling mandates to shaping outcomes.

By executing this plan with discipline and collaboration, GSWDB will strengthen the region’s workforce ecosystem, enhance access to opportunity, and deliver measurable results for employers and communities alike.