



The Northeast Ohio
TALENT DIVIDEND

... Progress by Degrees

Midyear Report

July 2011



Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education

Introduction

On December 2, 2010, the Northeast Ohio Council on Higher Education (“NOCHE”) and its regional Talent Dividend Steering Committee launched the Talent Dividend Action Plan to increase college attainment in Northeast Ohio and reap the economic benefit that would result.¹ Research shows that college attainment and per capita income are directly related, and in Northeast Ohio, a one percentage point increase in four-year postsecondary degree attainment would yield a \$2.8 billion increase in personal income annually.

A recent report from The Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce² demonstrates the need for the Talent Dividend. That report states that by 2018, almost 60% of Ohio jobs will require some postsecondary education, with new jobs requiring postsecondary education growing by 153,000 and jobs for those with no postsecondary education growing by 29,000. Also by 2018, Ohio will create 1.7 million job vacancies both from new jobs and from job openings due to retirement, and 967,000 of these job vacancies will be for those with postsecondary credentials.

In developing its Action Plan, the Steering Committee considered strategies to increase postsecondary attainment at all levels from two-year through graduate and professional education. The discussion resulted in a focus on improving college readiness, increasing retention to degree completion, and increasing degree attainment among adults with some college and no degree. With advice from the nonpartisan research firm Public Agenda, the Steering Committee recommended the following strategies:

- increasing participation in dual enrollment programs to allow students to become comfortable with college level work without full tuition costs, and give students the chance to earn college credit prior to high school graduation;
- increasing the college knowledge of pre-college students and families so they are familiar with the requirements for college entrance and college completion;
- increasing social support for students and encouragement and accountability to guide them to successful completion of college;
- engaging employers in college recruitment and enhancing college-going culture in the workplace;
- expanding adult experiential learning pathways for career advancement; and
- providing professional development opportunities for implementers so they can better support and inform stakeholders and the public.

¹ <http://www.noche.org/media/1/FinalTDAPDec2010.pdf>

² <http://www9.georgetown.edu/grad/gppi/hpi/cew/pdfs/State-LevelAnalysis-web.pdf>

In order to measure progress toward increasing college attainment, the Talent Dividend Steering Committee identified six metrics. The following are the baseline data for these metrics from 2009 (and they will be updated in late autumn 2011 for 2010 data):

On-time high school graduation rate:	82%
College continuation rate:	40.8%
Adult postsecondary participation rate:	3.9%
College completion rate:	39.05%
Number of degree holders:	897,482
Yearly change in degrees awarded:	+4,584 or +12.76% from 2008 to 2009

The complete Talent Dividend Action Plan describing these strategies and metrics in detail and other information are available online at www.noche.org/TalentDividend.

This Talent Dividend Midyear Report 2011 outlines the progress and accomplishments of NOCHE and the Talent Dividend Steering Committee since the December 2010 Summit. This report includes the following highlights:

1. **Expanding membership** of the Talent Dividend Steering Committee and continuing engagement with this group in oversight and implementation.
2. **Increasing involvement** in the National Talent Dividend Network, where NOCHE’s leadership of the Talent Dividend has been highlighted as a best practice in the National Network.
3. **Planning and implementing programs** within working groups focused on dual enrollment, increasing college knowledge, improving student retention, engaging employers, and expanding adult experiential learning pathways.
4. **Developing regional goals** for the Talent Dividend Metrics, which are expected to be formally adopted in August of 2011.

The Steering Committee

The Talent Dividend Steering Committee has provided invaluable leadership and insight on this important initiative. Steering Committee members have been selected for their commitment to increasing college attainment in Northeast Ohio and their capacity to motivate others to implement the goals and strategies outlined in the Talent Dividend Action Plan. These regional leaders represent business, educational, philanthropic, and civic organizations. Their dedication to the Talent Dividend is outstanding, and their continued involvement is vital for Northeast Ohio’s economic prosperity.

Since the Talent Dividend Summit in December of 2010, several members have joined the Talent Dividend Steering Committee. They are

- Marianne Crosley, president and CEO at the Cleveland Leadership Center;
- Michele Scott Taylor, chief program officer at College Now Greater Cleveland;

- Justin Bibb, special assistant for education and economic development for the Cuyahoga County Executive;
- Alice Stephens, executive director at Employment Source (Stark County);
- Nicole Price, HR service delivery lead at FirstEnergy;
- Bridget McFadden, director of training and outreach at Ohio College Access Network;
- Beth Dawson, director of workforce development at Remington College; and
- Mike Sherman, provost at The University of Akron.

A complete list of Steering Committee Members is available at www.noche.org/TalentDividend.

The Steering Committee is charting the course for implementation of the Action Plan through periodic meetings, teleconferences, and subcommittee activities. The Steering Committee has also considered goals for the Talent Dividend metrics, with final goals to be adopted in August of 2011.

Jon Rochkind, vice president and director of research at Public Agenda, joined the June meeting by telephone and briefed participants on new research about the attitudes and behaviors of young adults with respect to college going. Mr. Rochkind also provided valuable insight and analysis on the Talent Dividend metrics and their proposed goals.

The Steering Committee continues to serve as the vital link between strategy and implementation, bringing together regional stakeholders and holding them accountable for the Action Plan announced in 2010.

The National Talent Dividend Network

NOCHE and the Northeast Ohio Talent Dividend took center stage at the National Talent Dividend Network Meeting in Chicago on May 9 and 10, 2011. At the invitation of CEOs for Cities, the national nonprofit organization of urban leaders that ignited the Talent Dividend movement nationally, and FutureWorks, the economic development consulting firm that developed the Talent Dividend framework, NOCHE Executive Director Ann Womer Benjamin presented three times during the two-day conference.

On the first day, Ms. Womer Benjamin participated in a panel discussion, “Leadership: Engagement and Transitions,” to address the opportunities available by involving stakeholders from across business, higher education, and nonprofit sectors. The discussion included ways to engage stakeholders and keep them engaged in a regional initiative. On the second day, Ms. Womer Benjamin facilitated a “Lunch Learning Lab” (a small group discussion) on transitioning from planning to implementation. Her session later that day, “Continuing Momentum: Action Plan to Implementation,” addressed all conference attendees and stimulated conversation about ways to keep regional stakeholders engaged and moving toward college attainment goals.

NOCHE staff members attended sessions at the National Network Meeting and reported back to the Steering Committee on June 7, 2011, what they learned on topics such as adult degree

completion, data and metrics, marketing and communications, and employer engagement. The National Network is a valuable asset for learning best practices from across the country, and for showcasing Northeast Ohio's accomplishments nationally.

The Talent Dividend Prize

In January of 2011, CEOs for Cities announced a competition for the Talent Dividend Prize for metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) participating in the Talent Dividend. The contest-winning MSA will receive a \$1,000,000 award to be used for a national promotional campaign about its achievements in talent development. The winning MSA will be announced in September of 2014 and the determination will be based upon the greatest increase in the number of postsecondary degrees granted per one thousand people.

Regions such as Northeast Ohio were ineligible to enter the Talent Dividend Prize, since only *MSAs* were accepted. Furthermore, contest rules stated that only MSAs with a population of 500,000 or greater, or the largest MSA in a state, are eligible. This left the Canton-Massillon MSA ineligible for the contest, while Akron, Cleveland-Elyria-Mentor, and Youngstown-Warren-Boardman submitted registrations.

The Talent Dividend Steering Committee, upon learning of Canton's ineligibility and considering the importance of Stark County to the regional effort, signed a Memorandum of Understanding that reaffirmed its region-wide commitment to achieving the Talent Dividend. The MOU also stipulates that if one of Northeast Ohio's MSAs wins the contest, then a portion of the prize will be used to promote the entire region, and the balance will be used to promote the winning MSA.

CEOs for Cities announced the 57 MSAs competing for the Talent Dividend Prize at a media conference at the National Talent Dividend Network meeting in Chicago on May 10, 2011. During the same event, CEOs for Cities and The Kresge Foundation announced the Talent Dividend Challenge Grants—a matching \$10,000 grant to each of the MSAs in the Prize contest that secured \$10,000 of its own. Rising to the opportunity, Akron, Cleveland, and Youngstown have secured the requisite local match and are each participating in the Challenge Grant, infusing an additional \$20,000 into each MSA for implementing Talent Dividend strategies in their communities (for a total of \$60,000 in Northeast Ohio).

Action Plan Implementation

Below is a summary of activities completed since the December 2010 Summit, as well as projections for work to be completed during the next six months, for each of the strategic initiatives outlined in the Talent Dividend Action Plan.

Increase Participation in Dual Enrollment Programs

A subcommittee of the Talent Dividend Steering Committee has been established to identify and implement activities to increase participation in dual enrollment programs. The subcommittee

members are Kim Landis, Cathy Dietlin, Gloria Dunnivan, Joe Rochford, Karen Wells, and Kim Haverkamp (for Holly Harris Bane). The subcommittee has held two teleconference calls during the first half of 2011. In addition, the subcommittee facilitated a teleconference call with dual enrollment professionals to learn more about improving dual enrollment programs and participation, which included representatives from Youngstown State University, Stark State College, Cuyahoga Community College, Lorain County Community College, The University of Akron, and Kent State University. Recommendations which will become the basis of further activity include the following:

- develop better data collection and analysis capabilities since tracking student outcomes is difficult or impossible unless the student enrolls as a degree-seeking student at the same institution where he or she earns dual credit;
- increase the number of high school teachers who teach dual enrollment courses within secondary schools, which includes clarifying what credentials teachers need and/or offering courses, perhaps in a hybrid ground/online format, which are team-taught by both a high school teacher and a college instructor;
- create a program that brings together college and university dual enrollment professionals and secondary school administrators to articulate the benefit of dual credit and facilitate new agreements; and
- advocate for state policy that finances dual enrollment courses in secondary school similar to the manner in which Ohio funds the Post Secondary Enrollment Option program, for which recommendations from the Ohio Association of Community Colleges have been forwarded to the Chancellor of the Board of Regents.

Concurrently with the activities stated above, NOCHE and College Now Greater Cleveland prevailed in obtaining a \$450,000 College Access Challenge Grant from the Ohio Board of Regents for purposes of advancing this strategy as well as the next strategy in this report. In the area of dual enrollment, NOCHE and its collaborating partners will engage in the following activities, commencing July 1, 2011, and ending June 30, 2012:

- Kent State University will implement a program to increase the number of high school teachers who are qualified to teach dual enrollment courses within secondary schools.
- Lorain County Community College will expand programs to team-teach courses as another way to expand student participation in dual enrollment courses.
- REACHhigher, the Lorain County P-16, and the Lake/Geauga Educational Assistance Foundation will offer programs to provide the academic support high school students need to enroll in and complete dual enrollment courses.
- Youngstown State University will pilot and evaluate “The Achievement Alliance,” a model academic bridge learning community to prepare high school students for dual enrollment courses.
- The University of Akron and Kent State University will create summer bridge programs in developmental education (particularly math and reading), career development, and/or faculty/peer mentoring.

- NOCHE will coordinate activities, measure success, communicate progress, conduct professional development meetings, and help participating organizations advertise dual enrollment programs.

Increase College Knowledge

The aforementioned College Access Challenge Grant from the Ohio Board of Regents includes two substantial components to increase college knowledge among prospective college students and their families:

- First, building upon its expertise in college access programming, College Now Greater Cleveland will design, implement, and evaluate a comprehensive college access and success curriculum for school counselors and college access professionals. The program will train professional educators how best to serve students through the college-going process.
- Second, instructional designers at WVIZ/WCPN ideastream will distribute college access information online through a website designed with stakeholders from across the state. With expertise developing content for television, radio, web, and mobile devices as the largest public broadcasting station in Ohio, WVIZ/WCPN ideastream is the ideal partner to deliver educational content in innovative ways.

In addition, NOCHE and WVIZ/WCPN ideastream are collaborating to research the media capabilities of secondary schools and the existing college access programs within those schools, and will use the data to create a short video on a specific college access topic with the intention of distributing the video through the media available in the schools and online (e.g., NOCHE's and ideastream's websites and social media networks).

Finally, NOCHE's College Information Bureau hosted special events on December 11, 2011 at Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus and April 27, 2011 at Polaris Career Center to educate students and their families about the college going process. Many Northeast Ohio colleges and universities participated in both events, including Kent State University, Hiram College, The University of Akron, Cleveland State University, Ursuline College, Notre Dame College, Lake Erie College, The Northeast Ohio Medical University, The University of Mount Union, The College of Wooster, Lakeland Community College, Baldwin-Wallace College, Youngstown State University, Lorain County Community College, and others. A similar event will take place this fall in the Mahoning Valley. Planning is underway for the program which will help students navigate the college selection and admission process, and help families with questions about financing a college education.

Increase Social Support, Encouragement, and Accountability

By utilizing its Chief Academic Officers (CAO) Committee of provosts, deans, and vice presidents for academic affairs at all Northeast Ohio colleges and universities, NOCHE has been cultivating higher education stakeholders to develop specific recommendations for the Talent Dividend. As a result, The University of Akron Provost Mike Sherman has joined the Talent

Dividend Steering Committee and has offered to develop recommendations on behalf of public university provosts.

In addition, NOCHE's CAO Committee has made progress this year with regard to programs to improve college student retention among all institutions.

- In April, the CAO Committee approved the reinstatement of a regional Cross Registration program and authorized NOCHE to begin collecting agreements to implement the program as early as fall of 2011. Cross Registration allows full-time students in good standing at participating institutions to enroll in undergraduate courses for credit at other participating institutions without paying additional tuition, thereby facilitating degree completion.
- At the same meeting, participants heard from Cuyahoga County Executive Special Assistant and Steering Committee Member Justin Bibb about emerging programs to promote college access and degree completion among Cuyahoga County residents. Student retention was a topic for discussion, especially since regional collaboration could help improve retention rates.
- The July CAO meeting continued the student retention discussion and added developmental education with guest speaker Tim Culver, vice president of consulting services at Noel-Levitz, a higher education enrollment management consulting firm. Participants are interested in utilizing predictive modeling to augment decision making with regard to student retention programming. A review of recent and best practices in developmental education, particularly in math, was part of the discussion.

Engage Employers in College Recruitment

The strategy to engage employers in college recruitment got an early start at a Portage County Talent Dividend event at Hiram College on February 3, 2011. Hiram teamed up with Kent State University, the Northeast Ohio Medical University, and NOCHE to sponsor an event for employers to learn about ways they can support college going among adults with some college and no degree. While the program would promote the college options available at the participating institutions, the primary focus was to encourage employers to support their employees beyond tuition reimbursement. For example, time constraints often limit the ability of some adults to return to college, so employers could offer flexible work schedules or quiet work rooms where employees could complete assignments during breaks. Through the work of an employer engagement subcommittee, including Terrie Nielsen, Shana Marbury, David Kaminski, Kim Landis, and Alice Stephens, activities for employer engagement will be refined and repeated in the region. The current focus of the group is to develop a specific call-to-action for employers that reinforces their interest in cultivating an educated workforce.

NOCHE sought further insight on employer engagement in a May teleconference with Judith Crocker and Karen Herpel from the Manufacturing Advocacy & Growth Network ("MAGNET"), particularly with respect to a specific industry cluster. This was a helpful discussion, and some of the suggestions are reflected in the next section.

Expand Adult Experiential Learning Pathways

Just as NOCHE has engaged its CAO Committee for student retention, NOCHE and its college and university partners are exploring possibilities for future programming to expand adult experiential learning pathways through prior learning assessment (PLA). To start, NOCHE staff members have learned from other Talent Dividend initiatives and consulted with the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (“CAEL”) about its LearningCounts.org PLA initiative.

PLA is a mechanism that colleges and universities use to award credit toward a degree to adults with prior work or training that equates to college coursework. PLA generally requires the prospective recipient to develop a portfolio demonstrating his or her prior learning that a faculty member or administrator at the higher education institution reviews for college credit.

With considerable interest from several colleges and universities in the region, NOCHE is working with a group of administrators to explore ways to improve PLA procedures at the institutions or even develop a collaborative, regional approach among the institutions that would greatly improve services to prospective students. Furthermore, an initiative may include hosting events across the region to both educate employers about advantages of the service and educate prospective students about how the service will bring them closer to college degrees. A meeting is set for September of 2011 and will include representatives from two-year and four-year public and private institutions.

Provide Professional Development for Implementers

Hosting professional development conferences is not a focus of the Talent Dividend this early in implementation. Instead, subcommittee meetings have proven valuable to provoke action to implement the Action Plan. Professional development meetings are expected to play a larger role in the future, especially with the College Access Challenge Grant and sharing best practices in professional educator training and dual enrollment.

Metrics

As previously noted, the Talent Dividend Steering Committee endorsed a set of metrics which was released in the Action Plan last year. Since then, a Metrics subcommittee formed, consisting of Tom Waltermire, Chris Thompson, and Joe Rochford, to establish goals for these data. An initial set of goals was submitted to the Steering Committee for discussion in June, which has led to further refinement of the proposed targets. The Steering Committee is in the final stages of determining the goals, and formal adoption is expected in August.

In the meantime, NOCHE’s staff has advocated for the adoption of the Talent Dividend Metrics with key stakeholder groups—educational institutions, college access organizations, and philanthropic entities—to assure that the entire Northeast Ohio community is consistent in how it measures progress toward increasing college attainment in the region. Stakeholder groups can and do measure other educational outcomes, and NOCHE’s outreach simply underscores the importance of a common language to collective action.

Conclusion

NOCHE and the Talent Dividend Steering Committee announced an *Action Plan*—not a *Strategic Plan*—on December 3, 2010. The implication is obvious. The announcement envisioned activity. The Northeast Ohio Talent Dividend Action Plan has never sat on a shelf and has consistently been a call to action. With the announcement barely seven months ago, the following actions are already under way:

- recruitment for and engagement with the Steering Committee, which uses the Action Plan as a rubric for progress and success;
- outreach with other Talent Dividend cities, with Northeast Ohio serving as a model for how to engage and organize stakeholders and develop a written action plan;
- implementation of a College Access Challenge Grant to train professional educators about ways to promote college going among pre-college students, and to increase the availability of and participation in dual enrollment programs;
- special events to reach students and their families directly in order to train them on the college selection, admission, and financial aid processes;
- review of college student retention strategies at the highest levels of our colleges and universities, with a goal to identify students in need and the interventions to keep them in college;
- engagement with employers in conversations regarding promoting college attainment among adults with some college and no degree, with recommendations that go beyond tuition reimbursement; and
- working with adult education specialists from the region's higher education institutions to revisit how prior learning assessment is done to facilitate the process for prospective students and enable them to earn a degree faster.

The Talent Dividend Summit 2011 will showcase the region's progress on these initiatives and more. With the new stakeholders that have been recruited, the funding that has been secured, and the momentum that has been established, the 2011 Summit will be a celebration of action and progress.