

**PA CAREERLINK
LACKAWANNA COUNTY**

**BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM (BST)
STRATEGIC PLAN**

A Formulated Strategy
of Business Outreach Initiatives
Supporting Workforce and Economic Development
in Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania

January, 2008 - December, 2009

Developed by the PA *CareerLink* Lackawanna County BST in Cooperation with the
Lackawanna County Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

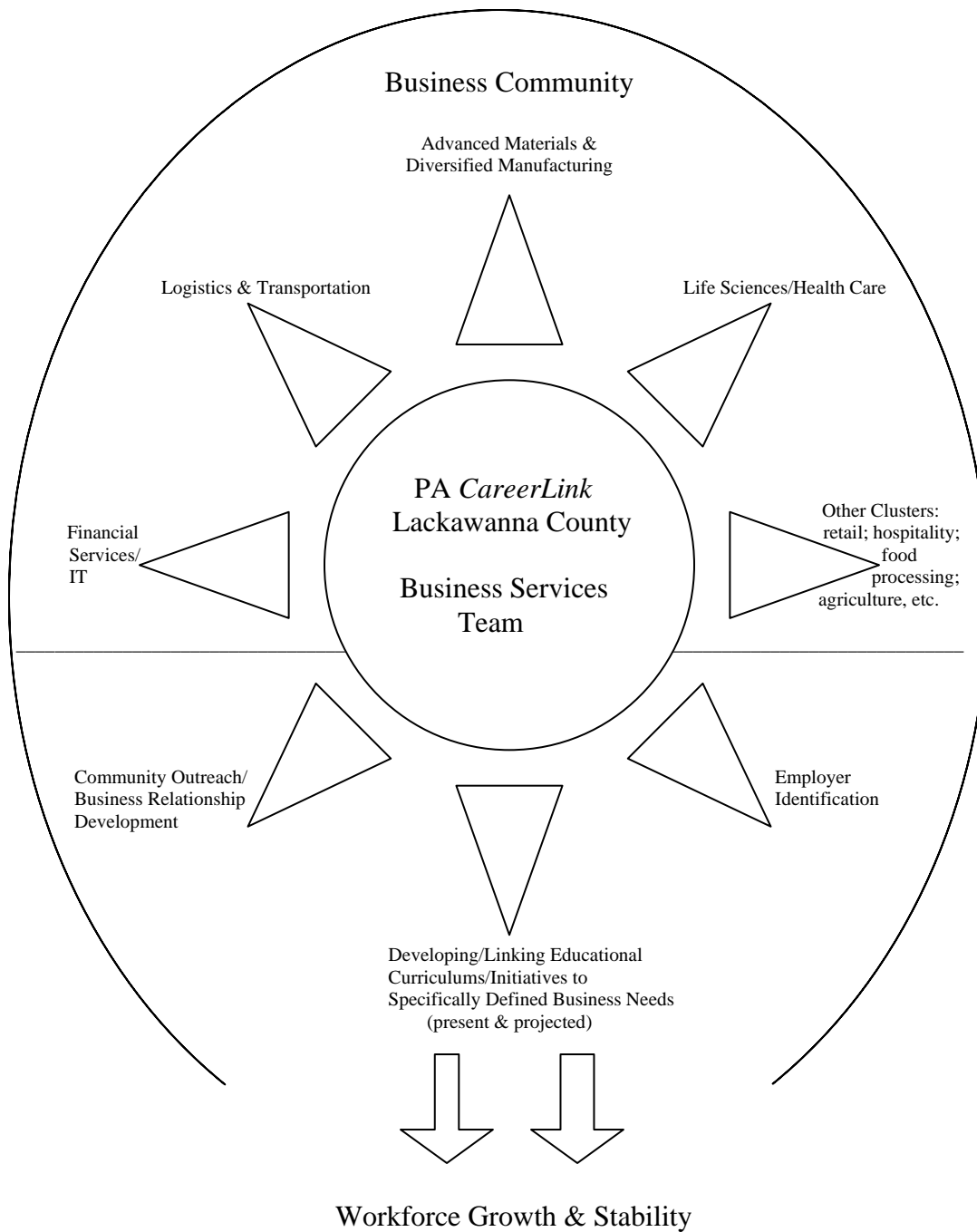
The PA *CareerLink* Lackawanna County, although in existence since late 1999, conducted its grand opening in the Spring of 2001 with a goal to provide the best possible mix of services to a clientele that included a wide variety of customers but, most distinctly, the local job seeker. Supported by integrated personnel from varied partners and guided by a Consortium of Operators framework, the PA *CareerLink* Lackawanna County began to emerge as the premier workforce support system for local residents as well as business and industry. Providing linkages to jobs; a myriad of employment-related workshops; a one-on-one case management and counseling model; access to training opportunities; and business support, solid building blocks for on-going development were laid.

Guided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Job Ready PA Initiative, systematic changes began to evolve that not only addressed current worker needs but promoted the on-going development of a trained workforce that could not only compete in today's global economy but that would significantly and specifically support both the current as well as projected needs of the business community in Lackawanna as well as surrounding Northeastern PA counties. To affect this outcome, the spotlight fell on the local *CareerLink* centers and triggered the development of Business Services Teams (BSTs).

The Business Services Team concept revolves around provision of comprehensive services to the business community. How these services are delivered are particular to individual services centers; however, all must support the rationale that efficient and effective delivery can significantly drive economic, workforce and community development. Internal operational practices, thus, must promote collaborative initiatives and serve to coordinate broad as well as individualized-based outreach plans of action and promote a "demand-driven one-stop."

The PA *CareerLink* Lackawanna County has an established BST under the direction of its Site Administrator. Targeting monthly meetings, representative staff includes both Bureau of Workforce Development (BWDP) as well as Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I individuals with projected inclusion of non-partner entities(such as BREP representatives from the local Chamber of Commerce) to ensure comprehensive business coverage. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Executive Director and Economic Planner as well as a BWDP Regional liaison currently sit to provide broad oversight and guidance and ensure coordinated linkages with all Industry Partnership and Worker Training Grant initiatives. Utilizing the Lackawanna County WIB's targeted industry clusters, the BST structure evolved through dedication of industry-specific staff affiliations based on prior experience and/or industry involvement to ensure the provision of quality services. Additionally, BST members have received training from WIB staff to ensure quality of service and knowledge of on-going, industry-led initiatives.

Structurally, the BST operates accordingly:



The premise supporting this structure lies in the concept that pre-assigned, trained staff appointments within each cluster (2 staff to each) will allow for intense dedication to not only specific business/employer needs within the cluster but probable aggregated needs across the cluster as well. Identification of these needs thus lead to the development

of significant “plans of action” in the form of specialized curriculum development, enhanced industry partnership collaboration, strengthened linkages with economic development entities, goal-oriented workforce needs productivity, etc.

As external outreach guides team responsibility, internal operational systems must be formatted to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. Utilizing the following seven “Framing Questions,” BST members provided in-put as to individually recognized areas for concept development:

- What is a BST?
- What services do you have to offer?
- How do industry clusters drive what services are provided by the entire *CareerLink*?
- Industry clusters are comprised of specific occupations. Do you know what occupations are in demand and what the required skill sets are?
- What tools are needed to do it right?
- How do you envision flow and communication to be?
- How can we use a data base of employers to provide better service?

From this, targeted areas of need emerged:

- On-going staff training to ensure effective and efficient service provision;
- Development of consistent outreach materials/tools;
- Improving open lines of internal communication;
- Formulation of industry-specific employer data bases;
- Development of industry cross-walks to eliminate outreach duplication;
- Redefined/enhanced workshops;
- Industry-partnership activity infusion into operational procedures;
- Staff involvement in community-based partnership development;
- Production of enhanced marketing materials.

Monthly meeting agendas now support discussions of the above issues to ensure on-going operational flexibility and enhanced performance.

Also critical to the success of the PA *CareerLink* Lackawanna County’s BST operations are concerted linkages with contiguous PA *CareerLink* centers located in the currently defined Northeast region of Pennsylvania that includes three additional WIBs: Pocono Counties (Carbon, Monroe, Pike & Wayne); Luzerne/Schuylkill; and the Northern Tier (Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Tioga, & Wyoming) which, in turn, are supported by 8 *CareerLink* centers. Recognizing that regionalization is driven by such workforce

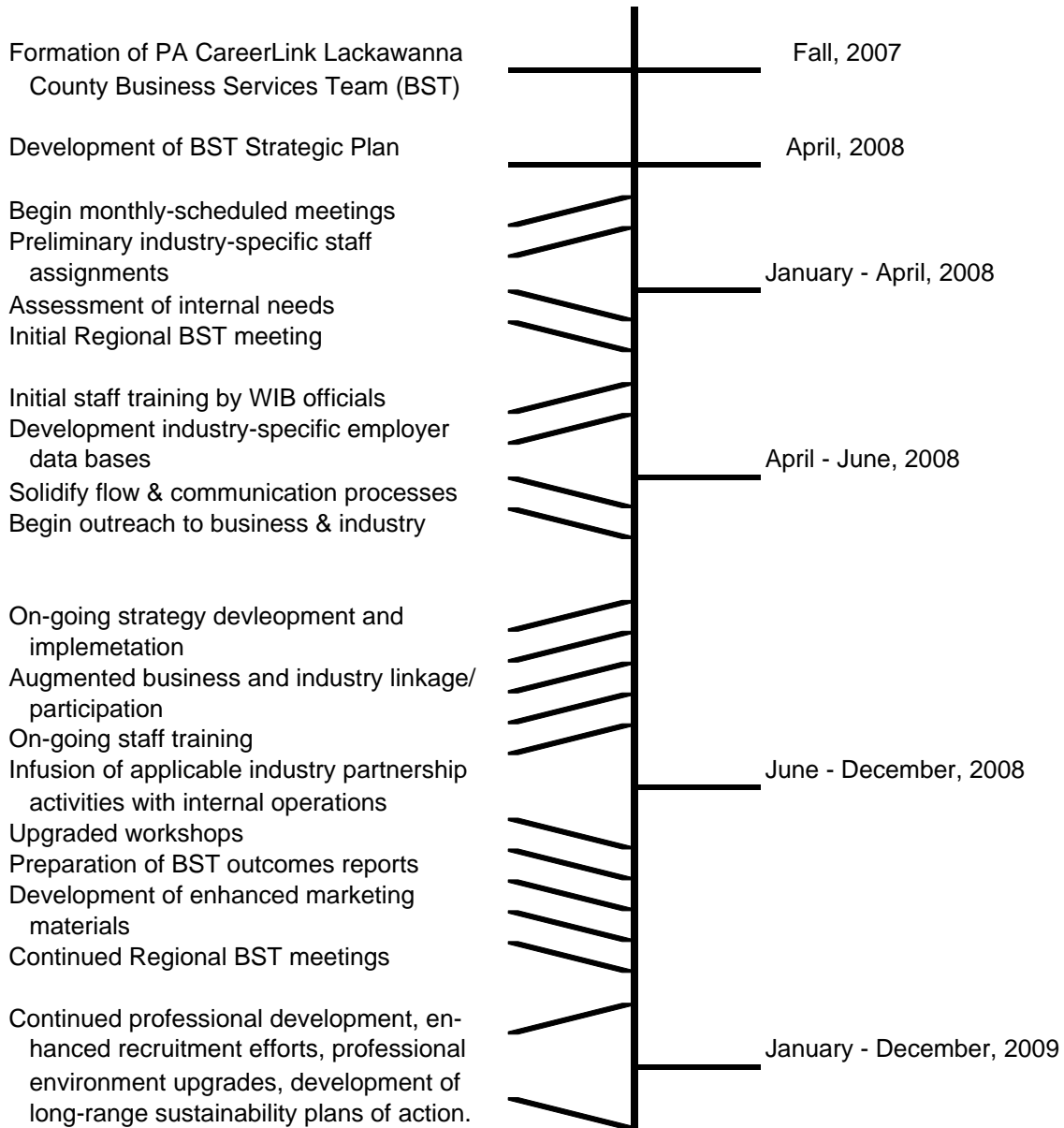
development issues as substantial commuting patterns, similar high-priority occupations, overlapping industry locations, and currently operating regionalized industry partnerships, the need for a systemic provision of services was addressed through the development of a Regional BST. Spearheaded by the BWDP Regional Liaison, the organizational meeting occurred in Spring, 2008, with subsequent meetings to occur on a projected quarterly basis.

Having identified, assessed, and addressed the current climate, the PA CareerLink Lackawanna County BST sets the following goals (in timeline format):

PA CAREERLINK LACKAWANNA COUNTY BUSINESS SERVICES TEAM

STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE

January, 2008 - December, 2009



Note: All times listed on this Activity Timeline are contingent on the continued design of "one-stop: operations as currently mandated by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

In addition, promoting a professional environment, designation of a “business area” is under consideration to allow for on-site business interviewing capabilities and staff-assisted service provision thus enabling local business and industry to coordinate all aspects of hiring and employment-related needs. Trained staff augments the overall *Center’s* productivity and works to ensure its sustainability within the community. Long-range goals, under consideration, include capital building expansion, increased staffing capability, and partner enhancement and expansion.