

**2003 NATIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE AWARDS PROGRAM**  
Nomination Entry Form

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[http://www.WorkforceATM.org/subject.cfm?results\\_sub\\_id=37](http://www.WorkforceATM.org/subject.cfm?results_sub_id=37)***

**I. IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION**

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Name or signature of State Administrator approving the nomination:

Paul Gussman, Deputy Director

**II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

Name of Program/Project Nominated: Council of Economic Advisors

Nomination Category

(Check only one. Use a separate form for each nomination entered.)

**Innovation – Architect of Change**

Collaboration – Pyramid

Tools and Technology – Compass

Professional Development/Capacity Building – Building a World-Class  
Workforce

Excellence in Serving Business – Prism

Month/Year Initiated: December 2002

Is the nomination for:  **statewide program**       local program (no)

If local, please provide the name of the locality: *Not applicable.*



## ATTACHMENT

### IV. SYNOPSIS

#### a. The basic service(s) provided by the nominated program/project.

The California Workforce Investment State Board (State Board) created the Council of Economic Advisors (Council) to inform the State Board on economic changes and related workforce issues for the purpose of influencing its research agenda and policymaking. The Council will help connect research to policy, to real initiatives, and will ensure that the workforce investment system is driven by businesses' workforce needs. At the same time, the Council will assist the Board in responding to economic trends and changes.

The Council's role:

- Assist the State Board and partners to better understand how the economy works; how it is changing; how to prepare the workforce for current jobs and for jobs of the future; and, as a result, make a difference in the State's economic health, prosperity and improved quality of life through a better educated and skilled workforce.
- Help guide the State's economic/workforce research agenda to inform the State Board's and the State's workforce development policy.

#### b. The outstanding accomplishments/successes.

- Formation of the Council, which was formally created in December 2002.
- Monitoring of the California and national economies and of socioeconomic and demographic changes.
- Informative presentations and discussions by Council members on research and findings at the State Board's February and May 2003 meetings.
- A forum for discussion of key issues with leading experts in their fields.
- Council members' research made available through distribution of reports and via the State Board's website.
- A key strategy for meeting its information needs, which is the State Board's first Strategic Goal, as established in the Board Strategic Plan.
- In addition, as economic research is completed, the Council will interpret the data and findings, identifying the importance to the workforce investment system, and the system's role in responding to economic trends and changes.

#### c. The reason(s) the nomination should be considered for a national award.

Establishing the Council is an aggressive strategy that takes a proactive approach to ensuring that employers' workforce needs drive workforce investment in California. This strategy provides the workforce investment partners with access to the research and counsel of leading economists, public policy analysts, academics, and economic development professionals, and a forum for policy discussion with these experts, which otherwise might not be available.

## V. CRITERIA INFORMATION

### a. Project Basis

The basis for establishing the Council is the State Board's need for timely economic and workforce information, and for interpreting and understanding this information in the context of policy and decision-making for workforce investment. The immediate customers for this project are the State Board, Local State Boards, administrators, service providers and other workforce investment system partners – internal customers. Business and job seeker customers will benefit from the resulting improvements in employment and training services.

The State Board's mission is *"to provide strong leadership in achieving the success of the overall workforce development system, for the benefit of all California – its people, businesses and communities."* The State Board defines California's workforce investment system as "education and workforce development linked to economic development," which is referred to at the federal level as "education, employment and training, and economic development." The State Board has a leadership role, and an important supporting role, to help the system effectively serve its customers – California's employers and job seekers.

In order to carry out this role, the State Board must have access to economic and workforce information that is analyzed and reported in ways not currently readily available through the normal labor market information collection and reporting system. This includes information focused by economic region, industry clusters and other factors. This need for information is captured in the State Board's first strategic goal, to *"Ensure the most timely, relevant information about changing workforce needs and investment opportunities"* (*California Workforce Investment Board 2003-2004 Strategic Plan*, May 2003).

The State Board must be able to understand current economic changes and events, as well as long-term trends, and interpret current research findings in the context of workforce investment. It must then be able to factor in the socioeconomic and demographic changes taking place, and find key points for strategic investment in labor force development.

The Council provides the expertise for all of this. Specifically, the State Board created the Council to assist the State Board and Local State Boards, their partners, administrators and service providers (internal customers), as well as the Governor, to better understand changes occurring in the economy, how these changes affect businesses' workforce needs, and how the workforce investment system may best prepare the workforce for the jobs of today and tomorrow. With this Council, the State Board seeks to provide leadership for the workforce investment system in better understanding these issues and, thus help ensure the global competitiveness of California's businesses. This work will help improve opportunities for economic independence, prosperity and a better quality of life for California's job seekers.

The State Board must understand the changes taking place in the economy, and how businesses' workforce needs are changing, in order to guide the workforce investment

system, through effective policy making. California's workforce investment system is driven by businesses' needs, chief among them is the need to adapt quickly to changes in the economy and workforce needs. This means having timely, on-target information on a variety of economic and workforce-related issues.

To provide this input, Council members present their relevant research, and then interpret the research findings in the context of the impact on the workforce investment system and policymaking. As resources allow, Council members and State Board staff may further the research on select topics and findings that are of greatest interest to the State Board.

This work will provide the State Board and the workforce investment system with better information and insight into the impact of economic changes and key issues, which will ultimately improve services for business customers and job seekers.

The Council is still in its initial stages, having only begun in February 2003 a series of presentations planned for the State Board meetings throughout the year. The members have already provided timely updates on the economy at the national and state levels, and on select regional and local economies, which have highlighted both urban and rural regional economies. Also, research findings have been presented on issues impacting workforce investment, including California's budget crisis, the changing demography of the workforce, educational attainment and wage gap analysis.

The presentations allow the State Board members to hear about the research and findings directly from the researcher, and to have the opportunity to ask questions directly of that researcher. This brings the research to life and adds context to the research that might not otherwise be available. In this way, the Council members are connecting their research to policy to real initiatives.

## **b. Project Operation**

The State Board membership includes representatives of the internal customers identified above (see V. (a) Criteria Information, Project Basis); business and industry are also strongly represented on the State Board. Through this representation, the customers for this project were fully integrated into the process of selecting and establishing the Council. Ultimately, the job seeker and business clients – the external customers – will benefit from the Council's efforts through provision of well-guided, effective and efficient programs and services.

Early in 2002, at and around the Strategic Planning Seminar held in February, the State Board, staff, partners at the California Technology Trade and Commerce Agency, and consultants had several discussions about improving the ability of the State Board to receive timely information on the economy and workforce issues and trends.

During the 2002-2003 strategic planning process, the State Board established a strategic goal around the need for improved economic and workforce information, "To ensure the most timely, relevant information about changing workforce needs and investment

opportunities.” The State Board decided to establish the Council as a key strategy for achieving this goal during the preparation of the Strategic Plan when several options were proposed, including the appointment of a Council of Economic Advisors to be a resource for timely economic research and information, and to assist the State Board in understanding and disseminating this information in a broader policy arena.

During the spring and summer, the State Board identified several potential nominees for participation on the Council, and after review and outreach, selected sixteen economists, public policy analysts, academics, and economic development professionals as members of the Council.

The establishment of the Council was officially announced at the State Board meeting in December 2002. Council members later participated in the State Board’s 2003 Strategic Planning Seminar, providing information and perspectives on the economy, state budget, and select workforce issues. Members also made presentations at the May 2003 State Board meeting, providing updates on the economy, including at the national, state and regional levels. Both urban and rural regional economic updates were provided, with discussions about unique and common issues. Also, members presented findings from studies on the changing demography of the workforce in California, as well as educational attainment and wage gap analysis.

### **c. Use of Award Funds**

The award monies would be used to fund monographs or briefs that would further interpret and explain the findings of select research and the impact on business, workforce training needs, and the workforce investment system, and would include recommendations for development of policy to respond to the findings. The State Board would select the topics from the research presented by Council members.

### **d. Project Results**

#### **Achievements/Performance to Date**

- The Council of Economic Advisors has been established, with members including leading economists, public policy analysts, academics, and economic development professionals.
- Council members have increased the State Board’s awareness of current economic and workforce issues, and have helped the State Board to understand their related impacts regarding the business community and workforce investment.
- Council members have presented timely and relevant information to the State Board at the two meetings to date in 2003. Topics included updates on the economy, including the national, state and regional levels; urban and rural regional economic updates were provided, with discussions about unique and

common issues. Also, members presented findings from studies on the changing demography of the workforce in California, and educational attainment and wage gap analysis.

- State Board members have had the opportunity to interact directly with Council members at the State Board meetings, during question-and-answer sessions and in less formal forums.
- Council members have provided State Board members with copies of reports on their research and findings.
- Council members' presentations and reports have been made available, whenever possible, on the State Board's website.
- Council members have provided advice on policy development which would positively impact the business community.
- As the State Board is able to redesign its website, the Council will have a page within that website which will focus on the Council's contributions, and where more research, ideas and recommendations may be shared.

## **Outcomes**

A more informed State Board, with regard to:

- The economy at the state and regional levels;
- The state budget crisis and its impact;
- Economic and workforce issues that impact businesses and job seekers;
- Businesses' needs in order to be competitive; and,
- How the State and the State Board may best respond to changes in the economy and businesses' needs.