In May 2018, the Missouri Department of Higher Education (DHE), the Missouri Department of Economic Development (DED), and the Hawthorn Foundation launched Talent for Tomorrow and Best in Midwest, initiatives that set out to fundamentally reset Missouri’s approach to meeting the state’s workforce needs and growing its economy.

The initiative produced an assessment of how the state’s current workforce aligns with employer needs and looked at different economic scenarios to help build a workforce system that will adapt as the economy evolves.

A task force of leaders from business and industry, education, the trades, the public workforce system, state and federal government, and members of the legislature guided the initiative. DHE and DED leaders made more than 80 presentations around the state, hosted a podcast that brought the voices of state and national leaders into the conversation, and shared extensive data about the state’s economic performance, educational attainment, and workforce readiness.

This work culminated in a suite of recommendations for a comprehensive workforce and economic development strategy for Missouri. These recommendations headlined Governor Mike Parson’s 2019 State of the State Address, which focused on his top priorities: creating meaningful job opportunities for Missourians and building an infrastructure that makes Missouri a great place to live and do business.

**THE MISSOURI WAY**

1. The status quo is not an option.
2. It’s now or never.
3. Leave no Missourian behind.
4. Infrastructure is the foundation.
5. Education changes lives.
6. Economic development is a team sport.
7. Fortune favors the brave.
8. Whatever it takes.
GOAL: Assess our state workforce and economic development against business and industry needs and make recommendations that will transform our approach for the betterment of all Missourians.

Our economy is growing, but that’s not the whole story.

8 out of 14 among Midwest states for WAGE GROWTH

1.25 million Missourians don’t have BROADBAND

24% of Missouri public high school students go on to GRADUATE FROM COLLEGE

11 out of 13 among Midwest states for JOBS FACILITATED by an economic development agency

12 out of 14 among Midwest states for LABOR MARKET PRODUCTIVITY – and the gap is getting wider

Missourians who leave the state are generally better educated than those who move here

14 of out 14 among Midwest states for GDP GROWTH

REGIONAL ENGAGEMENT

We held a series of regional meetings in an effort to meet Missourians where they are, learn about the unique challenges each region faces, and engage them in problem-solving. Core questions included:

1. What factors make your community more resilient than others?
2. What steps should we take to mitigate the negative and capitalize on the positive impact of global megatrends?
3. Why do you think your region’s economy has performed the way it has over the last 5 to 10 years?
4. How should we balance the trade-offs of a statewide versus a regional approach?

STATEWIDE ENGAGEMENT

The Best in Midwest Summit brought more than 300 Missouri leaders together in St. Louis for a conversation about global megatrends, opportunities, and how to create a comprehensive, 21st century economic and workforce development strategy for the state. This was not only an opportunity to share what we had learned with key movers and shakers, but also provided a chance to learn from national thought leaders.

STATEWIDE ADVOCACY

February

Governor’s Round Table on Fast Track
- Jefferson City
- Springfield

March

Governor’s Fast Track Statewide Tour
- Kansas City
- Joplin
- Cape Girardeau
- Jackson
- Farmington
- Cotterville

April

Chamber Leader Advocacy at the Capitol
- Jefferson City
- Business Leader Round Tables
- Kansas City
- St. Louis

FRAMEWORK:

MORE PEOPLE IN THE WORKFORCE

Become the best place to live and work.

Connect all Missourians with work.

You can’t make good public policy based on what you see when you look out of your window in Jefferson City.

MORE PRODUCTIVE WORKERS

Develop a labor market that works.

Work in a 21st century way.

Build infrastructure to drive economic development.

COMPETE TO WIN

Work together, compete together.

Create a new approach to economic development.

GOVERNOR’S CONFERENCE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Best in Midwest and Talent for Tomorrow initiatives were a central component of the Governor’s Conference on Economic Development in September 2018. This conversation included top state leaders in discussions about how to move Missouri forward, bring business best practices to state government, enhance worker productivity and wellness, and strategically target, develop, retain, and attract talent.

GOVERNOR’S SUBCOMMITTEE ON WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

An unprecedented level of cross-department collaboration brought the leaders of each of Missouri’s executive agencies together, to take a comprehensive approach to workforce development. The subcommittee’s recommendations focused each department’s expertise and resources on achieving a single goal: increasing the number of Missourians who are prepared for good jobs, now and in the future.

TIMELINE

1. May 4, 2018: Task force initiated
2. June 27, 2018: Best in Midwest Summit
3. July 16, 2018: Call for ideas issued
5. January 17, 2019: Executive Orders issued
6. March 18, 2019: Executive Orders accepted
7. April 3, 2019: Chamber Leader Advocacy Day at the Capitol
8. May 14, 2019: SB 68 Fast Track legislation passed by General Assembly
9. July 1, 2019: FY 2020 budget reflects agency transformation
10. August 28, 2019: Agency transformation legally effective

Launched May 2018
Convened leaders from business and industry, education, the trades, the public workforce system, state and federal government, and the legislature.
A new state financial aid program that addresses workforce needs by providing resources to empower adults to earn industry-recognized credentials in areas designated as “high-need.”

17,000
Maximum Annual Student Reach

$10 million
FY 2020 Appropriation

635
Program Areas
Approved by the Coordinating Board for Higher Education

Public colleges and universities submitted proposals to facilitate the development and expansion of employer-driven education and training programs. These projects are designed to substantially increase educational attainment and target state and regional workforce needs.

19 Projects at 17 Public Institutions
$18.9 million FY 2020 Appropriation