

**GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE BOARD RI  
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (YDC)  
February 21, 2008**

**Minutes**

**Members Present:** Brandon Melton, Chair, Sharon Moylan, Sandra Powell, Robert Paniccia

**Members Absent:** Lorna Ricci, Martin Trueb, Commissioner Jack Warner

**Staff Present:** Michael Koback, David Francis, Maureen Mooney

**Others Present:** John O'Hare, Joseph Cannon Jr., Robert Ricci, Susan Bowler, Christine Grieco, Arthur Jodoin, John O'Hare, Johan Uvin, Nick Ucci

Chair Brandon Melton called the meeting to order at 9:45 a.m. and welcomed everyone. He noted the full agenda and thanked staff for the work in putting this agenda together.

**Minutes of 8/9/07 Youth Development Committee meeting**

Chair Melton asked for a review of the meeting minutes of the 8/9/07 Governor's Workforce Board Youth Development Committee (GWBRI – YDC). He then asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

**Vote:** S. Moylan motioned to approve the minutes of the GWBRI-YDC meeting as presented. S. Powell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

**Report on Youth Workforce System: Q1 and Q2 Outcomes**

D. Francis referred committee members to the handout in the meeting packet entitled: "Youth Workforce System Q1 and Q2 Outcomes". He presented this report which highlighted information on the Youth Workforce System's deliverables, quarter 1 and quarter 2 outcomes, annual in-kind and leveraged dollars as well as statistics on the increased number of youth providers and new applicants. He also reported on opportunities for linkages, statewide expansion and the increase in numbers served. The complete presentation outline is on file.

A general discussion followed on topics relating to the Youth Forum group, the Job Corps, workplace readiness and soft skills as well as curriculum areas. L. Norris provided an overview of the Junior Achievement program. She mentioned effective approaches utilized to educate youth about workforce readiness including the use of videos portraying situational work experiences and team building projects. She acknowledged the lack of knowledge some youth have with the employment application process. She also acknowledged that although the Junior Achievement program is composed of very bright students who are in leadership roles, that even on this level there is a breakdown of English and writing skills. She stressed the importance of work readiness programs that will be made available in the youth centers. These programs will address such topics as dressing appropriately, showing up to work on time,

successful integration in the workplace and teamwork. She cautioned that if we are not teaching these topics as part of the curriculum available to youth, then we are not adequately preparing them for today's contemporary labor market. L. Norris reported that they are working on standardizing the levels of service in each youth center in order to ensure they are teaching the same, consistent information about core skills as well as occupational and technical skills training.

S. Powell inquired about possible certifications resulting from the youth training. L. Norris responded that Junior Achievement training offers certification, but that no certifications are available for training from the youth centers at this point in time.

Chair Melton reported on a recent meeting held with employers at the United Way. The meeting addressed the topic of core competencies and other skills needed from entry level employees. He noted the use of the term core skills rather than soft skills to describe the proficiencies needed by employers. He explained that these core skills were comprised of team building, problem solving, customer service, interpersonal skills, and strategic thinking. Chair Melton offered to forward a meeting summary to committee members.

J. Cannon commented that the needs of employers are basically the same regardless of industry or size. He also commented that youth today are asked to do a tremendous amount of work on their own without training from parents, the community or schools. This is particularly difficult for youth who are at lower reading levels or who have no specific work experience. He noted it is crucial to focus on building core skills for these youth and that the employers need to be more engaged with their learning process.

L. Norris acknowledged that these core skills are not currently part of any curriculum. She noted that adults currently in the workforce have learned these core skills through a developmental process and over a long period of time. She raised the question of how we replicate this process through mentorship programs and other methods.

S. Bowler commented on the Department of Labor & Training's (DLT) proactive role in regards to these skill training issues. She acknowledged the information that has been disseminated throughout the social service area. She noted the large number of youth who are prematurely responsible for themselves. She stressed the importance of providing skill training information in a concrete way to those service organizations working with the at-risk youth on a daily basis. She raised the question of how we put our resources together to create a path for these youth.

M. Koback asked L. Norris if the skills training mentioned could be incorporated into the capacity building of the youth professional network. She responded that she is encouraged by the large number of educators who are attending trainings along with the workforce development professionals. She reported they are still figuring out how to make systems change happen at this level. One goal is to ensure that youth are not being over-served with duplicate case management and job development systems. She emphasized that system change is an important priority going forward.

J. Cannon noted the important opportunity for the GWB to work with the Youth Council, the two local workforce investment boards (LWIB) and other professional organizations to form an alliance that advocates for youth. He noted a key issue on the agenda in the upcoming Workforce Partnership of Greater RI (WPGRI) meeting is "What is the future

for working with youth in this state?” He suggested depicting an organizational structure on paper starting with the GWB Youth Development committee and including all organizations within the state that are doing similar and overlapping work to ensure we are getting the leverage needed.

B. Melton introduced a colleague; Alexis Devine, Youth Development Coordinator of Lifespan and Vice Chair of the Youth Committee of the Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Board. She noted the role of business in the developmental process, in recognizing what it means to prepare youth for the workforce and in creating behavior change. Equally important is the commitment on the part of business to provide workforce related training and mentoring partnerships for youth.

J. Cannon inquired about one of the statistics of the presentation. He noted that the Q1 and Q2 cumulative outcomes show a return to school number of 520 youth. He pointed out that this was one of the most significant results of funds invested in our youth programs. He also noted this number has increased and asked if we are tracking the youth after they return to school to determine what key factors were involved with their decision.

R. Ricci added that considering that 42% of the youth are at-risk, 520 is a significant number of youths returning to school.

L. Norris noted that the GWB Planning and Evaluation committee asked similar questions about data collection and noted the importance of having this data available. There is also interest in collecting data on the numbers of youth attached to the workforce early on, how this affects youth staying in school, and the attachment to the workforce later on. She reported that an important goal is to build a reporting function into the youth case management system that will allow improved data analysis.

### **Youth Workforce Program PY07/FY08 RFP Status Report**

N. Ucci referred to the “Report to the Governor’s Workforce Board’s Youth Development Committee on the 2008 Statewide Youth Workforce System” which is on file. This report summarizes the number and types of proposals received for the current RFP. The RFP was issued in November and this report provides detail on the categories of youth services to be included in the proposals. There were 73 proposals in total requesting nearly \$8 million (both for the Workforce Partnership of Greater RI (WPGRI) and Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston (WSPC). A breakout of the RFP response is also detailed in this report. The planning estimate for contracted youth to serve is estimated at 3,300, and this number is expected to rise to over 3,500. N. Ucci noted from the proposals received that summer employment opportunities could include industries in health care, technology, marine trades, creative arts, hospitality and tourism and would serve to bring youth into some of the high growth opportunities in the state. He noted employment opportunities would be available that are specifically designed for youth with developmental disabilities, as well as those engaged in the justice system and in foster care.

N. Ucci reported on the statistics related to leveraging based on the numbers available to WPGRI. 41 proposals were received to serve 3,600 youth for a total of \$4.8 million. These funds were leveraged with \$1.5 million of in-kind dollars and \$2.3 million in total leveraged dollars. This brings the total funding amount to \$8.6 million for this RFP just

for WPGRI. N. Ucci noted that both youth councils have made recommendations and that staff members are working with vendors to rework budgets and to bring numbers in line. He noted this process should be completed in March and that he will report back to the YDC committee on the number of youth contractors to be served with funding dollars.

R. Ricci noted significant leverage is expected with in-kind dollars next year. He explained differences in funding for current services as compared to previous years before the infusion of state dollars. Previously programs were funded with federal dollars and restrictions existed with the long-term comprehensive programming which was targeted with eligibility tests based on income. For example, with the WIA program a family of 3 could not earn more than \$20,000. In addition to this, the youth served must have met one of six barriers to employment (in need of remedial services, involvement with juvenile justice system, pregnancy, parenting, homelessness, or in foster care). This was a difficult population to serve, however it was the population Congress mandated the local workforce investment boards (LWIB) to serve. The funding for current youth initiatives provided by the GWB allows the LWIBs to serve all youth.

John O'Hare noted however, that we are still assisting more hard to serve clients than ever before. Because of the additional funding and leveraged dollars the program is now serving 42% of youth. J. O'Hare noted that though the restrictions have been lifted, we are serving more of those at-risk clients with barriers.

M. Koback asked if there was any evidence of alignment with the industry partnerships with this round of proposals.

N Ucci stated there is no direct linkage to the Industry Partnerships. He reported however, that on the adult side of workforce development both LWIBs are working on an Industry Skills Development initiative with funds approved by the GWB. The RFP is currently being developed and they are requesting this connection with industry partnerships as part of the scope of work. This scope of work will tie into programs and services with both the adult and youth systems. He noted the importance of leveraging funds to get the youth into a career path in the high demand, high growth sectors.

It was noted by J. Cannon that this issues speaks to the strategic planning effort by the Youth Council. He also suggested that youth currently in school who are not college bound will be the most underserved people in the state unless we focus on providing services to them. It was noted these youth generally leave high school with no job experience and no career goals. The number of youth needing services increases if you add the large number of youth who attempt college but drop out after 2 years.

J. O'Hare noted the potential of other initiatives that are overseen by GWB. For example the Express grants could very easily be attached to the Industry Partnership program to address youth services and programs. The same potential exists with the Apprenticeship program currently in re-structure. He noted the importance of opportunities available by linking the initiatives of the two LWIBs and the GWB.

## **Updates: Lori Norris**

### **Training**

L. Norris reported that to date there are 300 new individuals receiving training since October. She also reported that trainings were held on: adultism (October) a Youth Confab (November) child labor laws, OSHA, Knowledge, Skills and Abilities (KSA) and 10 competencies of a youth services provider (December and January). She also reported on a partnership with the higher education community offering a forum this past January which helped providers understand the different programs available to assist youth in accessing college such as financial aid and planning tools to access career choices. L. Norris noted that in March, training will be offered on using assessment as a tool for career planning. She indicated that now is the time for evaluation from the participating community on the youth who have been in the system receiving services. She noted this evaluation will occur over the summer and information will be presented to the YDC in the fall.

### **Saratoga Initiative**

L. Norris reported on a recent visit to the U.S.S. Saratoga, an aircraft carrier housed on the naval base in Middletown. She mentioned that the Navy has donated this ship to the foundation and will be moved to Quonset. She indicated that the department was approached by Frank Lennon, Executive Director of the Saratoga Foundation, to consider a partnership in an effort to use this museum for workforce development purposes. L. Norris noted this is a long range goal, but she also noted that funds are available immediately to provide training. One training concept is to create a scaffolding industry specific occupational skills training for youth who are not able to attach to the adult system. This training could include youth with disabilities or youth at a disadvantage. She noted a meeting to be held next week which will discuss the possibility of bringing in the marine trades industry partnership, technical career staff from the RI Department of Education (RIDE) asking the question if it is possible to build an industry specific training with an all youth agenda.

M. Koback mentioned that Frank Lennon may attend the next GWB board meeting to discuss the proposed Saratoga project.

### **Other Business**

M. Koback indicated that Christine Grieco will provide an update on the Apprenticeship Program and the recent RFP. He mentioned that the Youth Development committee will be endorsing the recommendation of the apprenticeship evaluation committee which will then go to the Strategic Investment committee for funding approval.

C. Grieco provided an overview of the restructure of the Apprenticeship program. She reported that in January, an RFP was released and a co-meeting of the Youth Development committee and the Apprenticeship council was held. Grace Kilbane from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) spoke about national apprenticeship goals. C. Grieco reported that the reading and rating process is complete and that there are five proposals in total. She mentioned that all 7 evaluators came up with the highest rating for the same consultant. Considering the level of expertise of the consultant, C. Grieco noted they come already prepared to move this project forward. The action before the YDC is to endorse the recommendation of Coffey Consultants. Subsequent

approvals for funding will be requested from the Strategic Investments committee on March 10<sup>th</sup> and from the full board on March 13<sup>th</sup>.

C. Grieco explained that after the contract is signed, the steering committee will be meeting with the consultant on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. She noted the tremendous interest of individuals to be included on the steering committee. She also indicated they would to include one member from each of the Industry Partnerships on the steering committee. This will ensure that the partnerships are cognizant of the importance of the connection between youth and apprenticeship programs by strengthening their commitment in this collaboration.

B. Melton asked C. Grieco to summarize the deliverables for Coffey Consulting. She noted the following major points:

- ◆What is happening with our Apprenticeship Program currently? How is it functioning? What are we doing well? Where are changes needed?

She noted that the technology piece is very important citing the program is extremely paper laden. She also noted that current opportunities for the program consist solely in the construction industry (i.e. plumbers and electricians) and that the opportunities need to be expanded.

- ◆Other states are offering apprenticeship training in several new areas including health care. She noted there are approximately 12 possible industries to consider for the expansion of the program.

S. Powell emphasized the need to expand the current apprenticeship program as well as ensuring its connection to the workforce development system and the trades. She also noted the importance of developing recommendations that are relative to the state of RI, that provide appropriate linkages and that move the apprenticeship program into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She noted the consultant will be the facilitator for this process and will write the reports, present legislative recommendations and the ground work to support the work of the steering committee. She suggested that the results of these efforts will result in a handful of recommendations.

Chair Melton asked if there were any further comments or questions. Hearing none, Chair Melton asked for a motion by the Youth Development committee to endorse the recommendation of Coffey Consulting as the consultant for the Apprenticeship program.

**Vote:** S. Moylan motioned to approve the selection of Coffey Consulting as presented. R. Paniccia seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

M. Koback emphasized that it was important to note that the YDC and Apprenticeship council are the driving force behind the changes in the Apprenticeship program. This not only promotes the alignment of internal workforce development systems but ensures there is collaboration in driving the process.

C. Grieco mentioned the importance of adding individuals from other industries to the Apprenticeship council (currently there are 7). This will assist in expanding the focus and progress of the program. She agreed that this could involve possible legislative changes since current council regulations require a maximum of 7-8 members on the

committee. She re-emphasized the importance of the council being larger and more diverse.

M. Koback noted the importance of presenting the revised apprenticeship concept to business in order to strengthen their commitment for this program.

S. Powell summarized key concepts surrounding the YDC meeting by asking how we capture and present key initiative agenda items for youth programs? She suggested a simple format such as a quarterly report be present to the YDC about deliverables for both youth and apprenticeship programs. Training would be another item to report on. She indicated there are so many components relating to youth services that it is important to acknowledge the progress by a simple representation of information. She also suggested that the data collected and analyzed should indicate if the funding investments are doing what we set out to do. Concluding, she posed the question of how do we market our services and initiatives.

With no further business to discuss, Chair Melton asked for a motion to adjourn.

**Vote:** S. Moylan motioned to adjourn the meeting of GWBRI-YDC. R. Paniccia seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous; the motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Mooney