

# **WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND**

## **Strategic Development Committee Meeting Minutes**

**April 18, 2008**

**Members present: Chair Paul Harden, Susan O'Donnell, Fred Pendlebury, Fred Ricci, and Bob Cooper.**

**Members absent: Everett Amaral, Cynthia Farrell, Christine Grieco, John Iaderosa, Jane Nugent, Betty Pleacher, and Nancy Roderick.**

**Staff present: Dottie Miller, Nick Ucci, and Gail DuPont**

**Guests: Cheryl DaCosta.**

**With the delayed arrival of Chairman Paul Harden, Board member Fred Pendlebury called the meeting to order at 8:55 AM.**

### **Committee Meeting Minutes**

**The approval of the minutes from the February 22, 2008 committee meeting was delayed due to a lack of a quorum.**

**Dottie Miller requested that the Committee allow Cheryl DaCosta to make her presentation on the H1B grant earlier than anticipated on the agenda due to another commitment. The committee agreed to**

**change the order of the agenda.**

### **H1B Update**

**Cheryl DaCosta stated that the H1B Grant was suppose to end January 4, 2008, but was extended. She stated that in November 2007 it was realized there would be an excess of \$225,000 which would allow six companies to do additional training. Cheryl noted that an extension was granted by the DOL and both she and Dottie Miller worked with vendors to enable an additional spring semester of biotech coursework through the grant. In addition, Cheryl stated that the grant helped pay for high school teacher training in bio-tech programs. Cheryl produced a table of Total Expenditures and Obligations through April 2008 which stated that approximately \$15,000 would be unobligated by the end of the grant extension. Cheryl stated that she will follow-up with companies to assure that all of the money will be spent. She noted that sixteen (16) companies trained 885 workers; total training completions equaled 1,300; and that job placements and job promotions were short of goal but that her staff was working with the companies on these issues. She also stated that she was waiting for data reports from several companies. Cheryl did state that the wage increases portion of the program is doing very well.**

### **Adult Training Program Update**

**Dottie Miller spoke about the Industry Skills Development Initiative and its main goals of Development of Training; Establishing**

**Sector-Based One-Stop Career Center Presence; Establishment of “Industry Greenhouses”; and Implementation of Career Awareness Strategies.** She explained how industry will develop the training and that WPGRI and Providence/Cranston will manage the program. She stated that the bidders needed to have completed a skills gap analysis and have proven administrative capabilities to manage the program. She noted that the proposals were due by noon on April 30, 2008 and that the initial rating process would be conducted internally to verify that all required information had been included.

Paul Harden and Susan O’Donnell volunteered to read and rate the proposals with a goal of recommending a maximum of four proposals to the committee for approval and recommendation to the full Board. Dottie stated that the intent was to have approved contracts signed and in place by July 1st.

### **USDOL STEM Grant**

Nick Ucci spoke about the prospects of making the One Stop Centers in Providence and Pawtucket the focus for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Centers of Excellence through a STEM Grant proposals filed on behalf of both Local Boards. He referred to a report in the Providence Journal stating, “nearly 80 percent of the state’s 11 graders cannot do the math expected of them” and “Just 22 percent of juniors scored proficient” in math. “Fifty-one percent of the students ...missed proficiency by a wide margin.” He stated that this highlighted the need for this project and

**that it creates an opportunity to leverage funds and resources to train individuals while providing employers with a skilled workforce.**

### **ETPL Update**

**Nick distributed a list of 102 training opportunities to the committee that are made available through ITAs. He stated that it was his hope that the committee would consider raising the ITA cap and to have it in place by July 1st. He added that counselors at the One-Stop Centers have reported that it is difficult for many clients to afford the programs as 43% of the programs are over the current set caps.**

### **NTAR Proposal**

**Dottie reported that this proposal has been rejected.**

### **Apprenticeship Program Update**

**In the absence of Chris Geieco, Nick Ucci reported that a review of the apprenticeship program will be conducted by Coffee Consulting. As part of this analysis, he stated that Coffey will review program performance, policies, practices, procedures, materials, regulation, staffing patterns, and management systems. Paul Harden and Fred Pendlebury expressed concern that this training is a challenge to promote to employers of non-license occupations as it is a benefit to employees only.**

### **New Business**

#### **Entrepreneur Program Discussions**

**Paul Harden stated that clients engaged in entrepreneurship training would have to meet the same requirements as other federally-funded programs. He questioned how to use the money to expand programs and added that some entrepreneurs may benefit from additional training.**

### **Older Adult Workforce**

**Paul Harden raised the issue of how to appropriately service an aging workforce. Dottie Miller suggested forming a committee in the fall to examine this area.**

**A motion to adjourn the meeting was made.**

**Vote: Paul Harden motioned to adjourn, Sue O'Donnell seconded. The motion passed.**

**The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 am. The next meeting is scheduled for May 23, 2008.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Gail DuPont**

**Administrative Assistant**