

Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island

Strategic Development Committee Minutes

September 19, 2008

Members Present: Paul Harden, Everett Amaral, Chris Grieco, Susan O'Donnell, Fred Ricci, Bob Cooper, and Kim Weiss.

Staff and Guests: Dottie Miller, Jen Cornwell, Gail DuPont, and Mavis McGetrick.

Absent: John Iaderosa, Jane Nugent, Betty Pleacher, Nancy Roderick, and Allen Durand.

With a quorum present, Chair Paul Harden called the meeting to order at approximately 8:45 A.M. He asked everyone to review the minutes of the previous meeting on May 23, 2008.

VOTE: Susan O'Donnell moved to accept the minutes as written. Chris Grieco seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Adult Training Program Updates:

Paul Harden stated that there were a number of items for review on the agenda regarding Adult Training Programs. As Acting Executive Director Nick Ucci was absent, Paul asked Dottie Miller to update everyone on the Eligible Training Providers List (ETPL). Dottie directed attention to the ETPL list in the meeting folder. She noted

that the list included 141 programs approved for training. She said the plan was to have the Industry Partnerships involved in the Industry Skill Development Initiative (ISDI) review the training to ensure it met labor market demand, and to add training that would lead to employment opportunities.

The next item Dottie addressed was In-Demand Occupations. Dottie referred to a memo from Nick Ucci that identified seven new occupational titles under Tier Three of the WPGRI Board approved list of In-Demand Occupations. She said for ETPL approval, WIA required training prepare participants for identified In-Demand Occupations. She explained that the Tier Three category included specific occupations identified by local employers as in-demand even when it may not be identified by RI Labor Market Information (LMI). Susan O'Donnell requested clarification of the In-Demand Occupations three tier levels. Dottie explained that Tier One and Two referred to occupations identified by LMI and broader projections. She added that this committee had approved the policy last year and that it would possibly be beneficial to include it as a discussion topic at the next meeting.

Paul asked Jen Cornwell to provide an update on the Industry Skill Development Initiative (ISDI). Jen said regular meetings had been scheduled with the Industry Partners (IP) and Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) staff. She added that meetings with the netWORKri One-Stop managers and staff would be scheduled in

order to facilitate the inclusion of IP staff into the One Stop Centers. She added that she had held a meeting on September 11th to discuss the video production aspect of the project and that the process would likely require issuing a Request For Proposals (RFP). She stated she was hopeful some of the local colleges might help with this project to keep the costs down. Jen also reported that the partners were scheduled to be at the next Youth Vendor meeting on October 16th to present to their plans for supporting the youth centers. Jen concluded her report by announcing that the ISDI partner, Tech Collective, would deliver a presentation to the Strategic Development Committee at their next meeting to talk about their ISDI contract, their progress to date and what the IT Initiative plan includes for the coming year. She added that My Turn would be scheduled in the future to discuss the Marine Trades ISDI. Paul Harden spoke to the committee about a successful program conducted at the Newport Boat Show for 40-50 youth participants that focused on the marine trades industry.

Paul continued on to the next item on the agenda, ITA Vendor Performance Review. He said his concerns have centered on the performance of the training programs included on the ETPL. He explained that he wanted information addressing some of the following questions: were participants successfully completing the training?; were the training providers placing completers?; and were clients keeping their jobs? Paul stated that Nick Ucci had compiled a report of vendors in PY06. Dottie referred to the summary report in

the folders and said the report listed the vendors, entered employment rate, retention rate, credential rate, and average earnings measures. She explained the summary report was broken down by school not by program and identified outcomes for Adults (A) and Dislocated Workers (DW). The report showed the DW population had better outcomes overall. Dottie also referred to the individual Monitoring Reports in the folders for several providers. She reminded the members that the intent of the ISDI review of the ETPL was to strengthen and improve the quality of the programs, which would improve outcomes. Kim Weiss explained that problems that existed in PY06 had now been corrected. Chris Grieco said the skill of the netWORKri counselors in placement has also improved. Mavis McGetrick said the monitoring had given the State Workforce Investment Office (SWIO) and the LWIBs better information to screen the providers. Fred Ricci asked if updated data was available. Dottie explained that PY06 reporting period actually doesn't end until June of 2007 and that she the data provided was the most current available. Dottie stated that the role of the WPGRI Quality Assurance Committee was to scrutinize performance outcomes, and that most important focus of this committee should be the development of the quality of the training programs offered to ensure they meet RI employer and industry labor-force needs and industry standards.

Paul Harden introduced a model for Customized Training Programs. He asked Dottie to go through the Customized Training policy draft included in the folders. Dottie started by defining the program as an

employer-driven program that allows both LWIBs to respond to the needs of the local employer community with training that directly responds to their identified skills and occupational needs, while creating viable employment opportunities for unemployed and under-employed labor pools. She explained that the WPGRI staff would work with employers, talk to them about their needs and develop a contract agreement with them. She went on to say the employers would develop the training program curriculum, and be required to commit to hire 83% of successful training completers. She explained that the LWIB staff would work with the employer and the One-Stop Centers to recruit and assess the candidates. Dottie stated that, due to a statewide waiver, the employer match for training costs would be determined by a sliding scale ranging from 10% to 50%. This scale would be based on a combination of the number of job openings, the rate of pay, the skill level required, the related length of training, and the quality characteristic of the position and potential for long term employment growth. She reviewed a rating scale developed by WPGRI and Workforce Solutions of Providence-Cranston to determine the company's match based on the number of people to be hired, the size of the company, the hourly wage, and the length of training.

The members discussed the policy and the rating scale and Dottie asked for final comments and their endorsement for board approval. Mavis McGetrick said the policy must state that employers hire 100% of successfully-trained candidates. Susan O'Donnell and Fred Ricci

stated that, as employers, they could support the requirement to hire 100% of successful training completers. Susan also asked about the wage levels on the rating scale. After more discussion, Dottie suggested changing the 2 point level of Hourly Wage at Employment to read “\$7.40 to \$11.10 with employer-supported health care benefits”. Mavis also suggested a change on page two regarding the employer being current on Job Development Fund taxes be changed to refer to federal as well as state funds and taxes. Kim Weiss asked if 100% retention was required as well and Dottie answered that 100% retention was not required. Paul Harden wanted to include language to ensure that if an employer offers a successful training completer a position and he/she refuses the offer, the employer should not be penalized.

VOTE: Bob Cooper made a motion to approve and recommend to the Board the Customized Training Program policy with the following changes: “agreement by participating employer/s to hire 100% of successfully-trained candidates”, “employers must be current in all tax payments”, and on the hourly wage 2 point rating scale, “\$7.40 to \$11.10 with employer-supported health care benefits”. Chris Grieco seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Harden stated that the On-The-Job (OJT) program had not been offered for two years. He directed everyone to the On-The-Job Training Program Model and Implementation draft included in their packets. Dottie explained that the ISDI contracts included language

to allow their staff in the One-Stop Centers opportunities to develop OJT contracts with their industry employers. Dottie emphasized that the OJT program was designed for job candidates who require additional skill training beyond what employers normally provide. The new hire may have some of the skills required for the occupation, but needs additional training to be fully productive in the position. Paul Harden expressed concern that the program would only to be offered to the four industries involved in the ISDI. He expressed concern that this could raise serious questions and suggested that the proposal be tabled. Mavis asked if this was written into the ISDI contract. Dottie replied that it was included as an option not a requirement, adding that the policy was written to allow ISDI staff to offer this labor intensive program because of limited LWIB staff.

VOTE: Paul Harden motioned to table the On-The-Job (OJT) policy until it can be restructured or the staffing level at WPGRI improves. Everett Amaral seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul Harden asked if there was any Old Business. No one responded. He asked if there was any new business. No one responded.

VOTE: Bob Cooper motioned to adjourn the meeting at approximately 10:30 A.M. Susan O'Donnell seconded. The motioned passed unanimously. The next meeting is scheduled for October 17, 2008.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail DuPont