



Governor's Workforce Board Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee

**March 3, 2015
Meeting Minutes**

Committee Members Present: Mike Grey, Chair, Constance Howes, Mario Bueno, Channavy Chhay, Scott Jensen, George Nee
Committee Members Absent: Cheryl Merchant
GWB Board Members Present: Robin Coia
GWB Staff Present: Rick Brooks, Sherri Carello, Robert Kalaskowski, Dan Brown, Amelia Roberts
DLT Staff Present: Sean Fontes, Mike Healey, Carlos Ribeiro, Diane Gagne, David Tremblay, Sue Chomka
Others Present: Cheryl Dacosta, Tech Collective; Anne Walsh, WSPC; Brittany Morrison, GWB Intern; Alexis Stern, UWRI
Location: Department of Labor and Training, Conference Room 73-2

Call to Order

Chair Grey called the meeting to order at 8:35 am and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Minutes

Chair Grey asked for a review of the February 5, 2015 Strategic Investments & Evaluation Committee meeting minutes. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the meeting minutes.

VOTE: Constance Howes motion to approve, seconded by Scott Jensen. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Conflict of Interest

Per Chair Grey's request, Sean Fontes, Executive Counsel, asked for declarations on any of the voting matters before the committee for conflicts of interest. He explained that committee members should avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest according to the RI State Code of Ethics and Governor's Workforce Board By-Laws. He stated that committee members who disclose a conflict should both abstain from the vote and recuse themselves from any discussion.

Updates on FY 16 Incumbent Worker Training Grants

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to discuss the recommended policies and procedures for FY16 rolling Incumbent Worker Training Grants (IWTG) to ensure an accessible, responsive, and transparent award process. Referring to the policies and procedures handout, R. Brooks reviewed the purpose of changing Incumbent Worker Training Grants to a rolling process, the recommended proposal review process, marketing and outreach efforts, reporting, and monitoring plans. He noted at this point, the GWB staff has not received a response from the Department of Administration on whether the changes have been approved or not. S. Jensen suggested that the committee should vote on the matter and move forward with the recommended changes even though a response hasn't been received yet. Chair Grey discussed the difference between a RFP and a bid and how it relates to the RFP vs. rolling

Incumbent Worker Training grant process. G. Nee addressed the need to be flexible to effectively respond to business needs. He noted, with exception to the difference in monetary thresholds, the process developed for Express Grants is very similar to the rolling IWTG process. C. Howes asked about the approval process. R. Brooks noted the Strategic Investments and Evaluation Committee shall review and approve all Incumbent Worker Training Grants that have been recommended for funding. He added all reviewers will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement due to proprietary information that could be of interest to some readers. In regards to policy, C. Howes asked if proposals should be given additional points if the business is in a targeted industry. S. Jensen noted that they should receive additional points and Stefan Pryor is currently working to identify and develop a better perspective on what those target sectors are. The committee discussed the emerging composites sector and utilizing Industry Partners to help businesses develop proposals for GWB grants. Chair Grey stressed the importance of continually recognizing and identifying in-demand and emerging sectors to align the Board's efforts with the needs of businesses and jobseekers in Rhode Island. G. Nee asked about fiscal monitoring grantees to ensure businesses are spending the funds in the correct manner. R. Brooks discussed the current desk audit process and the on-site monitoring process under development. The committee further discussed assistance provided to businesses at the on-site monitoring visits. R. Brooks quickly reviewed the main points of the rolling IWTG process including the scoring rubric and items to be included on the spreadsheet for the committee and Board's approval. Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to approve the Incumbent Worker Training Grant annual RFP process to a rolling grant process subject to gaining approval from the Department of Administration.

VOTE: Constance Howes moved to approve, seconded by George Nee. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion of FY16 Innovative Partnership RFP

Innovative Partnership Evaluation

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to provide an overview of the Fourth Economy GWB Innovative Partnership Evaluation. R. Brooks noted the assessment evaluated the 10 programs that were funded from April 2013 to June 2014 and looked at some of the core elements of the grant to determine if those elements were contributing in a positive way to increase the employability of the participants and meet the needs of businesses. He reviewed the program employment rate, the total enrolled (459), and number of participants who completed the program (399). R. Brooks noted a total of 383 credentials were awarded and 73% of the completers were placed in jobs. The core elements of the program that were review included: employer partners, work readiness, experiential learning, case management and supportive services, and career pathways. R. Brooks noted the evaluation found that employer engagement was the most effective component of the program that provided a strong bridge to employability. He discussed the relationship between businesses and training providers as a key element of the program, noting employers were engaged in some aspect of the curriculum development or delivery, the work experience, or placement. He stated the evaluation found that some of the projects were more employer-driven and others were participant-focused but all of them were responsive to employer needs.

R. Brooks reviewed comparison with traditional WIA programs and discussed the expenditures, entered employment, and cost per job for both WIA and the Innovative Partnership program. The committee discussed the ETPL, difficulty maneuvering the WIA system, and the disconnect between JDF and WIA funded programs. S. Jensen noted an interesting finding was the comparison of cost per job between programs that serve high-barrier clients (\$5,066) and those

that serve lower-barrier clients (\$6,360). R. Brooks noted that some of the programs that serve low-barrier clients place participants in higher-wage positions that may require more intensive or costly training. S. Carello discussed the type of recruitment tools the programs used to find clients and stated participant follow-up and data collection needs to be more stringent to answer participant-level questions and develop longitudinal reports. Conversation ensued regarding employer satisfaction, waiting lists, best practices, and entering JDF participants into the EmployRI system.

Discussion of RFP Recommendations

Chair Grey asked Rick Brooks to review the FY2016 Innovative Partnership Grant recommendations. R. Brooks noted a total of \$2.3 million has been allocated for the program for FY16 and stated some consideration had been given to changing the duration of the grants to 2 years but the recommendation is to award 1 year contracts with the opportunity for renewal based on performance. In terms of priorities, an emphasis on higher wage rates and performance data collection has been added in addition to the pre-existing priorities. S. Jensen asked what success means for innovation. R. Brooks noted the staff is looking at performance-based funding to measure the success of a program. He discussed the option of a weighted system including variables such as credentials, paid work experience, and employment, and explained the methodology of integrating some component of a performance-based model into the program. M. Bueno expressed his concern with the impact of performance-based funding and deterring innovation by creating constraints. Chair Grey noted there should be some type of reward for programs that are high-performers. R. Kalaskowski described the structure of the model and provided examples of how the formula will hold programs accountable and also provide incentives. Chair Grey asked if there have been other programs that have successfully implemented performance-based funding. S. Carello, A. Walsh, and C. Ribeiro explained how the youth system utilizes performance-based funding.

The committee discussed a risk-reward option that could be incorporated and the purpose of funding new and innovative programs that could possibly fail. R. Brooks reviewed several additional recommendations including: requiring the NCRC as a target outcome, require work experiences to be paid with the expectation of using Work Immersion funds to supplement wages, including an employer satisfaction survey, and require programs to look into becoming eligible for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). M. Bueno noted the NCRC is not offered in Spanish and programs that serve primarily non-English speaking clients should not be penalized for that. G. Nee asked if there was a way to incentivize programs to work with Career and Technical Schools. C. Chhay expressed her concern with putting too many restrictions on a program that could possibly cause them not to serve under-privileged populations. M. Bueno and G. Nee noted it might be hard enough to get employers involved in the program curriculum in addition to requiring them to pay for wages too. S. Carello noted that many of the work experiences have been paid through the Innovative Partnership program in the past. C. Howes noted requiring a paid work experience changes the experience for a participant from a job shadow or internship to a temporary paid job. The common consensus of the committee is to provide an incentive or credit to programs that participate in the NCRC and provide paid work experiences supported with Work Immersion funds.

Program Focus: Express Grants

Chair Grey asked Sherri Carello to provide an overview of the Express Grant Program. Referring to the Express Grant program overview handout, S. Carello discussed the size of the companies served by Express Grants in comparison to the Annual Incumbent Worker Training Grant companies, industry breakdown, and target and outcomes for wage increases, credentials, and promotions. G. Nee inquired about the total amount allocated for Express

Grants in FY15. S. Carello indicated a total of \$400,000 was allocated. The committee further discussed tracking outcomes after training has occurred.

Adjournment

With no further business, Chair Grey asked if there was a motion to adjourn the meeting.

VOTE: George Nee moved to approve, seconded by Constance Howes. All were in favor, the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Amelia Roberts