

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board  
**Communication, Advocacy and Oversight Committee**

November 3, 2006  
**Minutes**

**WIB Members Present**

Nancy Hendrickson  
Jackie Mlynarczyk  
Willie Nesbit

**Members Absent**

Patricia Brady  
Amy Brenengen EA  
Tom Klas  
Tom Macy EA  
Deborah Montgomery

**Staff/Guests Present**

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO  
Kate Bates, WIB Staff  
Susan Speetzen, MN Dept. of  
Employment and Eco. Dev.  
Carol Dabruzzi, International  
Institute  
Wilhelmina Holder, African and  
American Friendship  
Association for Cooperation  
and Development

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**Call to Order**

Nancy Hendrickson, Acting Chair, called meeting to order at 11:35.

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**Approve Minutes**

The minutes were not able to be passed, as the members present were not present at the last meeting, and could not verify the content of the minutes. A vote by e-mail will be requested to gain approval.

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**Licensure of Foreign-Trained Health Care Professionals Grant**

Susan Speetzen, MN Department of Employment and Economic Development came to introduce the two organizations that are assisting foreign-trained health care professionals in getting licensure to practice in America. Carol Dabruzzi, International Institute and Wilhelmina Holder, African and American Friendship Association for Cooperation and Development (AAFACD) were present to update the committee on their work since the grant period began in July 2006.

Carol Dabruzzi had been running a program similar to this before the legislative funding was available, and used her existing database to recruit the 34 medical doctors, 15 nurses and nine “others” in the medical profession eligible for this assistance. The challenges she finds these individuals are faced most with are a need for English language skills, cultural skills, time management, organized study process, financial planning and assistance and links with supportive services. Carol explained that the process to become licensed in the United States is very long and confusing and many clients need help just navigating through this process. It can take seven years to be licensed in America, but with this financial help, the International Institute can help individuals complete the process in three or five years instead. The rural areas may be a good place for these individuals to go for training or work, as there is a high need in the areas outside the Twin Cities.

The AAFACD has recruited 55 foreign-trained individuals for this project, 30 doctors, 22 nurses, and a few “others” in the medical field. The vast majorities of the participants are African and have similar barriers as those being served by the International Institute. Some of these barriers are language skills, computer skills, interpersonal communication skills, soft skills, and the barriers that come with navigating through the process. Additionally, there is a lack of residency positions across the country, and even those who can pass all of the licensing exams still get held up in finding a residency program that will take them. Wilhelmina is trying to recommend that they go into specialties, such as Geriatrics or AIDS/HIV, to be more in demand. Another issue in finding any type of exposure to clinics in America is the complication of malpractice insurance that does not cover individuals who would be at the clinic for an internship. Wilhelmina informed the group of a two-year program at the University that retrains and licenses foreign-trained dentists, and if this pilot is successful there is a possibility that they will develop a similar program for others in the medical field.

Susan Speetzen followed up this discussion with some wider, more collaborative efforts that are going on in the state. A partnership has been created with Park Nicollet and they are offering the use of their medical library so the clients can have access to updated texts. There is a gentleman from Illinois coming to meet with Susan and service providers next week to see if they can partner on a grant opportunity in the future. There is also a meeting next week with the licensing boards for the various professions. Next year the full WIB will get an update on this program.

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#### **Update on New WorkForce Center**

Century College is considering the empty space adjacent to the WorkForce Center. If anyone knows of other interested parties, please let WIB staff know, as the building owners are very open to options in filling that space.

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#### **Update on JPA**

There is no update on the JPA issue at this time.

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#### **Update on WIB Membership**

There are currently ten business openings, though the board has received an application to fill one of these vacancies. The County has completed their reappointment process, and the City is still working on theirs.

Jackie told the group about the orientation session that was held this past Monday. It went well and there were a lot of good questions asked by the attendees.

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#### **Update on "Addressing Diversity in the Workplace" Program**

The WIB, DEED Job Services and Business Services staff from DEED and Workforce Solutions developed an event to address cultural barriers faced by small and medium sized business. The event was on October 25<sup>th</sup> and included five panelists from various cultures and a moderator from the Saint Paul Foundation. There were 79 individuals from various small and medium sized businesses in the area who attended the panel discussion. There was a lot of good discussion stemming from questions from the attendees. The next steps include a follow-up meeting with the attendees to meet as small work groups and discuss the issues more in depth. Willie Nesbit and Wilhelmina Holder both volunteered to be involved in this effort in the future.

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#### **Update on Marketing Efforts**

The WIB has spent the DEED marketing funds on running ads for a year in the Midway and Saint Paul Area Chambers of Commerce newsletters, beginning November of this year. There is \$1,500 left over that DEED has allowed the WIB to use for future diversity sessions and MnSCU/Business Services collaboration meetings. This spends out the \$9,000 that the WIB had to spend. There was a recommendation that this ad be placed in local newspapers as well.

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#### **Open Forum**

None.

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#### **Adjourn**

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 1:01 p.m.

**Next Meeting-** Friday, January 13, Location TBD