

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board
Communication, Advocacy and Oversight Committee

March 13, 2009
Minutes

WIB Members Present

Patricia Brady
Trixie Golberg
Butch Howard

Members Absent

Bob de la Vega
Kathy Engesser
Lee Helgen EA
Barb Mednick EA
Jim Schultz EA

Staff/Guests Present

Mary Jo Gardner, WIB CEO
Kate Raleigh, WIB Staff
Carli Stark, WIB VISTA
Wayne Young, Workforce Solutions
Terry Zurn, Workforce Solutions

Call to Order

Butch Howard, Chair, called the meeting to order at 11:42 am.

Approve Minutes

Motion made by Trixie Golberg with second by Butch Howard to approve the January minutes as presented.

Motion carried.

Approve 2008 Annual Report

Mary Jo went through the 2008 Annual Report developed by staff, partners and the marketing subcommittee.

Motion made by Trixie Golberg with second by Butch Howard to recommend the WIB's 2008 Annual Report for approval by the WIB.

Motion carried.

Update on Legislative Support for Building Lives

The Senate has introduced a Building Lives bill (S.F. 0411), requesting \$1 million in DEED's base budget. The Senate Economic Development and Housing Budget Division had a hearing on this bill, introduced by Senator Moua and supported through testimony from Commissioner Carter, Peter Jessen-Howard, Robert Morse and Mary Jo Gardner. The hearing went well and the committee asked good questions about the program. The WIB should know by mid-May if this bill has passed.

The County has applied for a federal earmark to support the program, sending a request to both Representative McCollum and Senator Klobuchar. The timeline on the federal earmark is less clear than the state request- it will depend on the interest in the program to get into the Senator's or Representative's appropriations bill.

Currently, the County is advocating for the program, but WIB members will be called upon to act when the timing is appropriate. WIB staff has legislative support letters ready to go when the time is right for members to advocate for the program.

Update on the Local Plan

The Ramsey County workforce partners are working on the state's Local Plan. This is an update year and the partners are going through last year's plan to see what information needs to be updated. This document lets the MN Dept. of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) know how Ramsey County will spend its workforce funding over the next year. The plan will come to this committee for approval at the May meeting. Please let Mary Jo know if you would like to be involved in updating the plan.

WIB Membership Update

Mary Jo gave an update on membership. One business member is in process with the county with action expected at the March 24 County Board meeting. There are two additional openings through the county in Labor and Economic Development. The City has three business openings. If anyone has suggestions for recruitment, please let Mary Jo know.

WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs

Terry Zurn and Wayne Young gave an update on the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, comparing program outcomes with state goals; the data reflects the first quarter of the program year. The program's performance goals are negotiated between the MWCA and the state with a difference in average earnings, which is based on each workforce service area's (WSA) population. The following are goals for all three programs (WIA Adult, WIA Dislocated Worker and State Dislocated Worker):

- Entered Employment- this goal is calculated the quarter after participants exit the program and compares the number of exited individuals who are employed versus all exited individuals from that period.
- Retention- this goal is calculated during the second and third quarter after participants exit the program and compares the number of exited individuals who are employed versus all exited individuals for that period.
- Credential- this goal calculates the number of individuals who complete occupation-based training within nine months of entering employment.
- Average Earnings- this goal measures the earnings per quarter of individuals in the second and third quarter after exiting the program.

Workforce Solutions is currently surpassing the majority of goals, with the exception of the credential goal for the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The State Dislocated Worker program exceeds all goals at this point in the program year. The state defines meeting a performance goal as meeting at least 90% of the state goal; Workforce Solutions is meeting at least 90% of 11 of their 12 performance goals, with the majority met at over 100% of goal.

The group discussed practices for meeting, exceeding and falling short on goals. Annually, the state hosts a roundtable where WSAs can meet and share best practices. Additionally, WSAs who are having trouble can ask for assistance from WSAs who are meeting goals to see what works for them. Incentive dollars are earned when a WSA meets all of their performance goals. Ramsey County uses these funds to improve their staff's skills by funding professional development opportunities.

The group also discussed how often they would like to receive updates on the three programs; Terry and Wayne suggested that they present this information twice per year- at the March meeting and the September meeting. Receiving updates at these times will allow the committee to see how the program is doing at six months into the program and at program year end.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Funds

Terry Zurn discussed the impact that the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds (stimulus funds) will have on Ramsey County's WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. The stimulus funds for Ramsey County workforce development will come down through the state to each local area. Ramsey County will receive \$631,993 for the WIA Adult program and \$1,247,316 for the Dislocated Worker program, to be mostly spent out by June 30, 2010. These funds are allocated according to the current WIA allocation, and they are in addition to the regular WIA allocation for these programs. While these extra funds will help serve the increase in customers at the WorkForce Centers, the state's Dislocated Worker program will most likely experience reduced funding this year. Workforce Solutions plans to continue working with their current program vendors, giving them majority of the state Dislocated Worker funds, while using the federal Dislocated Worker funds to serve all new clients in the next year. The program will focus on getting participants into short term training programs that will allow them to increase their job skills. The WIB can have a role in this by identifying which industries will continue to have openings. This information will affect where counselors send their clients for training.

The Adult program will increase their services in other ways. Goodwill/Easter Seals has been providing career counseling in five Saint Paul libraries- the goal is to at least double this service with the stimulus funds, including adding libraries in suburban Ramsey County. The workforce staff at the libraries can help job seekers one-on-one with job search and resume help, as well as lead workshops on various job seeking skills. There will be an increase in Job Service staff at the Ramsey County WorkForce Centers, adding a total of five staff. Job Service will increase their work with the universal customer and add workshops. Service providers have noticed an

increased need for financial management counseling and to address this, Workforce Solutions is working on a partnership with Lutheran Social Services to provide this service to Dislocated Worker clients.

The reporting required for these stimulus funds will follow the same guideline as the regular funding, but service providers will be required to report more frequently. Again, there will be a focus on training program participants in high-demand careers. The group discussed the performance outcomes expected with this increase in funding, stating that it is not realistic to have an outcome based on job placement, as it will take time for positions to be available in the private sector. Workforce Solutions is able to pay the wages of clients gaining work experience on the job, increasing their skills for when jobs do start to open. It is important to be cognizant of the fact that an individual cannot be placed in supported work within an organization that has laid-off employees. The committee asked to have brief updates on this topic at each CAO meeting. Helpful information for this committee would be any outcomes or results experienced with these funds, challenges Workforce Solutions and their vendors are finding and which industries clients are being trained for.

Other

The redevelopment of the WIB's mission and vision statements was not completed at the Strategic Planning session on March 5th and a meeting has been scheduled to accomplish this task. Those interested in working on the mission and vision statements should RSVP to Kate for the meeting on Tuesday, March 24 from 2:30-4:30 at the Ramsey County WorkForce Center- Saint Paul.

Adjourn

Upon completion of the agenda, the meeting adjourned at 12:49 p.m.

Next Meeting- May 8, 2009