

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board  
**Market-Driven Workforce System Committee**

November 12, 2003

**Minutes**

**WIB Members Present**

Ginny Sullivan, Chair  
Phil Hanson  
John Mohr  
Bob Veilleux  
Ellen Watters

**Members Absent**

Mary Brunkow  
John Giovannini  
Kirk Hayes  
Scott LeMire, Vice Chair EA  
Kevin Locke  
Lorrie Louder  
Mary McKee EA  
Howard Orenstein  
Tené Wells

**Staff/Guests Present**

Kitty Gogins, WIB CEO  
Kate Bates, WIB Staff  
Janet Ludden, Employer  
Solutions, Inc.  
Terry Zurn, Workforce  
Solutions

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**Call to Order**

Ginny Sullivan called the meeting to order at 2:00. Introductions were made for the new committee member, Phil Hanson.

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**Approve Minutes**

**Motion** made by John Mohr with second by Ellen Watters to approve the minutes of October 9 as written.

**Motion passed**

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**Decide on Sectors Receiving Additional Attention**

At the last Workforce Committee meeting, the group looked at the information from the Labor market subgroup regarding sector recommendations. The group agreed that Health Care should be our primary focus, with other sectors requiring further discussion. Closure was reached at this meeting.

The other two sectors in question were Biosciences/Medical Devices and Education. Questions last month around Biosciences/Medical Devices related to how large a sector is this currently or will it become and the level and types of skills required by those seeking jobs in this industry. It was shared today that Biosciences/Medical Devices is already a significant employer, employing nearly 9000 individuals in Ramsey County, is believed to have significant growth potential and is a key economic development priority in our region. The WIB has been instrumental in the past month in linking the City of St. Paul, Workforce Solutions of Ramsey County and the St. Paul Chamber to apply for a Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) grant in this area. The proposal has a research component to fill key gaps in current knowledge on bioscience workforce needs such as future job needs, skill requirements, educational and training requirements, etc. It also starts up public-private collaboration similar to the East Metro Health Careers Institute to begin the workforce preparation needed to support a vibrant Biosciences industry as well as address how our growing, disadvantaged workers and immigrant population can be prepared for successful careers in this industry. Workforce Solutions was praised for their strong effort in this area and all parties were complimented for the high quality grant application that was assembled in 10 days.

Discussion around Education revolved around how many low skilled workers does the Education sector employ and the split between public and private employers. Discussing the Education sector also brought up the issue of immigrants in our community and the language and skills gap that exist within this portion of the workforce supply, which poses a challenge to educators. Ramsey County has one of the largest immigrant populations in the state.

The group discussed the pros and cons of the selected sectors. All present agreed that Health Care was a good area to focus on, but not something to focus all of one's energy on, since there already are a lot of initiatives in this field. With Biosciences/Medical Devices, there is an opportunity for the WIB to take leadership on this sector and become a pioneer for this industry in Ramsey County, and get ahead of the Workforce curve. The

group also agreed that these three sectors are intertwined, and pursuing all three would allow people to work on different aspects of the sectors. It was decided that Health Care is the primary focus, with Education and Biosciences unranked after Health Care. Immigrants are also a priority for the group, though this will be addressed in conjunction with the three identified sectors.

The group discussed next steps for the Education and Biosciences/Medical Devices sectors.

- Kyle Uphoff from DEED is currently working on collecting data on the Education sector to expand our understanding.
- With biosciences/medical devices, the Biosciences Workforce Link grant is a good first step, and will continue to be pursued. Even if our workforce service area receives this DEED grant additional training dollars will need to be obtained.
- Dealing with the issue of immigration, the group discussed wanting to learn more about Iowa's new immigrant centers. Jim Zentner, from Workforce Solutions, is going to visit Iowa to see the New Iowan Center shortly and will be asked to share his learning with the group.

With the completion of identifying focus sectors, the Labor Market/Customer ad hoc groups will dissolve. A Biosciences ad hoc is already functioning for the Biosciences Workforce Link project. Effort in the Education area will be limited to increasing labor market insight for now.

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### **Decide on Next Steps in Health Care Sector**

Stemming from the Labor Market Health Care Panel, potential WIB action areas in the Health Care sector were discussed. Three areas were defined for further investigation:

- (1) Helping English Language Learners successfully integrate into the workforce (language and acculturation)
- (2) Dealing with system change to standardize courses/credits across MNSCU institutions to better enable transferring credits and thereby enhancing opportunities for pursuing further education and career laddering
- (3) Requesting the Youth Council to work on exposing more students to science careers to increase the workforce supply for Health Care, as well as biosciences/medical devices.

Two ad hocs were created, one to explore English Language Learners, and one to clarify the MNSCU transfer system. John Mohr and Janet Ludden volunteered to work on English Language Learners. Jim Anderson from Ramsey County, Betsy Johnson from HealthEast and someone from the International Institute were suggested as good additions to this group. For the MNSCU ad hoc, Mary McKee from Century College, as well as Betsy Scheller from Workforce Solutions were recommended for the group.

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### **Update on CEP Ad Hoc**

Kirk Hayes provided Kitty Gogins with the update for this group. Before sharing the report, Kitty reviewed background on the volunteer job coach project. The project was initiated based on focus groups with universal customers that showed the number one thing job seekers want from the Workforce Centers is one on one time with job counselors. However unless the job seeker qualifies for a specific program, the resources are not available to provide this service. CEP identified volunteer job coaches as an innovative way to leverage volunteers in our community to address this need. The Council of Churches staff and their consultant met in early September with Life Track, the Downtown WorkForce Center and North St. Paul WorkForce Center to develop a 1 page summary of what they would look for in volunteer coaches. St. Paul Council of Churches is now actively soliciting various congregations near each site to participate in the pilot. Several churches have expressed interest, and are looking into potential participation.

The WIB has been approached by the National Association of Workforce Boards, and the State, to apply for a demonstration project on increasing collaboration between grassroots Faith Based Organizations (FBO) and the WIB. WIB staff is looking into this further and if the aforementioned volunteer job coach project could serve as the foundation of our effort, Kitty reported that they would probably recommend proceeding. The potential benefits include visibility, technical support with the project and greatly improved odds of getting a FBO grant from the Department of Labor next spring to support the project.

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**Discuss Short Term Opportunities/Gaps**

Twin Cities RISE, a program that works primarily with low income African-Americans with multiple barriers, provides training and job placement support. They have so far been placing their clients in white-collar jobs, but now want to expand into trade jobs. WIB member Bob Veilleux, of the Minnesota Coordinator Association that represents all the trades in Minnesota will meet with them to discuss how to proceed. The WIB also linked Terry Zurn of Workforce Solutions with Bob Veilleux to provide a Dislocated Worker feed into trade training programs

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**Adjourn**

**Motion** made by Bob Veilleux with second by Phil Hanson to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion Passed**

Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

**Next Meeting-** January 8, 1:00-2:30, Midway Hospital