

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

March 11, 2004  
**Minutes**

**WIB Members Present**

Ginny Sullivan, Chair  
Scott LeMire, Vice Chair  
Kevin Locke  
John Mohr  
Joe Richburg  
Bob Veilleux

**Members Absent**

Phil Hanson  
Kirk Hayes  
Lorrie Louder  
Mary McKee  
Ellen Watters EA  
Tené Wells  
William Yang

**Staff/Guests Present**

Kitty Gogins, WIB CEO  
Kate Bates, WIB Staff  
Terry Zurn, Workforce  
Solutions  
Nancy Hendrickson, East  
Metro WorkForce Centers

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**Call to Order**

Ginny Sullivan, chair, called the meeting to order at 1:08 pm.

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**Approve Minutes**

**Motion** made by Scott Lemire with second by John Mohr to approve the minutes of January 8 as written.

**Motion passed**

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**Discuss Business Services Pilot**

The Business Services pilot is progressing very quickly and we expect it to be off the ground in June. The state has received a Department of Labor technical assistance grant of \$60,000, with \$30,000 to be received now, and \$30,000 to be received after July 1. Roughly half of the grant will be used to bring in a national trainer, the rest for customized training and business mentorship for both pilots (Minneapolis and Ramsey County pilot). The \$10K allocated for the business mentor in Ramsey County will not be sufficient to provide the level of mentorship desired, so incremental funding is being pursued. Seven letters of inquiry have been sent to various local foundations.

There will be roughly five staff dedicated to this project, including a new-hire by the state. The state is working on hiring a healthcare industry specialist. Representatives from HealthEast and Employer Solutions Inc. are on the interview team.

The national training firm, Newton Associates, will provide training the first week of April, and repeat the session again in mid-May. The training will go from a high-level overview, down to 20,000 feet. We are interested in the customized training taking it from the 20,000 feet level to “what do I do differently when I come into the office Monday morning.”

An important next step involves setting up focus groups with healthcare employers to get their feedback on how to improve the pilot, their service requirements and what services they are expecting to use. There will be two groups, with a possible third; one for hospitals, one for long-term care, and a possible group dealing with the “other” category in healthcare (including, among many, ambulatory health, clinics, and dentists).

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**Discuss Health Care Barriers**

There are two large barriers in Healthcare that the WIB is looking at addressing. These are how to further enhancing credit transfer within the MNSCU system to support career ladder advancement and how to reduce barriers for English-Language Learners. Discussion on credit transfer with Betsy Scheller from Workforce Solutions, and Carol Dabruzzo from the International Institute helped clarify that the problem has been observed for individuals moving from LPN to RN, for individuals who already have a US bachelor degree and for immigrants/refugees who have healthcare training outside of the US. It appears that receiving counseling early on regarding taking the version of a class that counts toward future degrees would greatly reduce the problem for LPN to RN.

Having the WIB focus on reducing barriers for English-Language Learners (ELL) has the potential to have a larger impact on the community and will be the focus of our efforts, with opportunistic work on the credit transfer.

An ad hoc group has met three times to address the ELL barrier issue. They have identified existing programs in Ramsey County, defined best practices and outlined potential opportunities for improvements. Included in this group are Workforce Solutions, Life Track, CLUES, HUBB Center, International Institute, HealthEast Care System, Employer Solutions Inc., International Institute and the Hmong American Partnership (invited). The two major opportunities identified are

- (1) Providing resources to employers to help support two-way cross-cultural training and ELL employee integration (hire assessment, new employee and line staff training, work-site culture, reasonable accommodations, available community resources, etc.) and
- (2) Working for systemic change in Adult Basic Education (ABE)-Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MNSCU) to prepare ELL learners for the workforce (workforce terminology in ABE, gap between ABE and level of English needed to be successful at MNSCU, standardized/more accurate MNSCU English entrance testing, coach-advisor to guide students in MNSCU, and leveraging Foreign Trained Medical Professionals education)

Another healthcare project is being done in rural Minnesota to address the gap between adult basic education and MNSCU. Kitty is trying to get time with the organizers to see how we can link in to this. If there are any other major initiatives going on in this area, please let Kitty know.

There is potentially incentive money coming to Minnesota this summer for having met its WIA goal. There is some discussion of workforce service areas that have sizable populations of ELL proposing an initiative in this area.

There was discussion about the thousands of refugees expected to emigrate here from Thailand and workforce related programs available to help, although it is presumed they will need a lot of support services initially.

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#### **Update on Biosciences Workforce Link**

The group working on the Biosciences Workforce Link project is currently waiting to receive funds for the project.

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#### **Update on Business Retention and Expansion Project**

Kevin Locke handed out a brief description of the University's project headed up by Michael Darger. In the past, they have done a project in the Midway area. Kevin will continue to try to reach Michael Darger and identify their current Ramsey County community project. The University's process involves working with communities to survey businesses to understand plans (e.g. expand, relocate etc.), urgent issues (e.g. zoning, workforce, ordinance problems, etc.) other concerns and opportunities affecting the business. The surveys can be broad or narrow. Nancy Hendrickson reported that she is involved in one of their projects in Blaine that is focused on manufacturers; MNSCU and WorkForce Centers are participating in the evaluation process and will be part of follow up calls with specific businesses that have a workforce need. She will be attending a meeting in April where the University will report on their work.

Kevin also recommended that we get in contact with other communities in the County and link with their economic development efforts to see if there is a workforce component that we should be involved in. Some communities are doing projection work on a regular basis and their surveys are pretty broad. This could be potentially very helpful to business services. Kevin will serve as the point of contact and report back to the group on progress in May.

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#### **Discuss Short Term Linkages**

Terry Zurn and Bob Veilleux have followed up on a link discussed a couple of months ago. Bob spoke to Terry's Dislocated Worker Staff about opportunities in the Building Trades. Bob represents a "high-road" career that provides training to employees, pays them a livable wage and develops a career track. His organization is opening a new training facility in Little Canada and he intends to invite the board to the open house. Bob is also visiting

schools to introduce students to the possibilities in his field. His organization used a school-to-work grant to develop a program and is now looking for high school partners.

It was suggested that the WIB expand their visibility in the community by presenting the WIB at local business organizations such as Rotary Clubs. These could also be a place for possible support in the future. The presentation given to the Vadnais Heights Economic Development Council will be sent out with the minutes for this meeting for members to use in these kinds of efforts.

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**Adjourn**

**Motion** made by Bob Veilleux with second by John Mohr to adjourn the meeting.

**Motion Passed**

Ginny Sullivan adjourned the meeting at 2:30 p.m.

**Next Meeting-** May 13, 1:00-2:30, Midway Hospital