

Ramsey County Workforce Investment Board

Advocacy and Public Policy Committee

October 14, 2002

Members Present

Marcia Fink, Chair
Jean Hammink
John Mohr
Ginny Sullivan

Staff - Guest

Lee Helgen, MN Workforce Council Assoc.
Barb Hoffman

Members Absent

Ellen Watters
Jan Wiessner

Call to Order

Marcia Fink called the meeting to order at 2:35 p.m. Welcome and introductions were made.

Approval of Minutes

Motion was made by Jean Hammink and seconded by John Mohr to approve the minutes of the September 9, 2002 meeting as written.

Motion carried

Lobbying Practices and Legislative Updates

Lee Helgen, Executive Director of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association, provided handouts on legislative positions on Welfare Reform, Maintaining Workforce Development System Capacity, Workforce Development Policy Issues, and a PowerPoint presentation, "The Challenge - A State Budget Shortfall!". Discussion followed.

- It is estimated there will be \$3.2 million in budget cuts from our current fiscal status.
- Block grant cuts have been a contributing factor to the recent problems in the Welfare Reform System. A \$20 million reduction for Local Intervention Grants for Social Services (LIGSS), reduction of \$5 million for Welfare to Work (WtW), and \$4.7 million to the Community Social Services Act block grant have only been compounded by impact of the 60-month time limit to MFIP caseloads.
- State budget exercises are looking to prepare most departments for a ten percent cut. Revenue enhancements will mean tax increases to balance out the \$3 million budget cuts.
- Policy conversations and problematic pieces surrounding the budget deficit centered on dislocated workers. System-wide, the program is almost out of money. They are only accepting applications through November and December and are only into the first quarter of the program year. Significant numbers of layoffs are continually being reported.
- Minnesota youth programs received a 20 percent cut. There is currently a waiting list for youth, a population that needs training and will likely take the lower paying jobs to start their employment careers.
- Unknown factors that will also play a role:
 1. New Governor
 2. New Legislators
 3. New Legislative Leadership

4. New Budget Forecast
 5. Current Biennium Shortfall
- Lee mentioned that much of the Legislature is in favor of local control regarding WIA and TANF and said it would be helpful to get employers to the table on those discussions.
 - Members suggested/recommended that Lee work with others to develop a case regarding funding shortfalls that address employer needs/interests. Employers could be helpful at the Legislature if they understand how cuts affect them.
 - Members discussed the steps the health care industry had taken with MNSCU schools to see participants through completion. It was noted that a collaborative effort should be made not to “steal” employees from one another. Members were asked to think of models regarding approaching employers and the business community to see what it would take for them to make an investment in a collaborative effort. It was noted that the programs and skills we talk about today could very well be what will support the economy five or ten years from now.
 - Question was raised if there was an economist in St. Paul that could help translate the MN Department of Economic Security’s data to help project that sort of information. This information could be a compelling marketing tool to draw employers’ interest.
 - The Committee will stay in touch with Lee Helgen to follow-up any leads.

Old Business

WIA/One-Stop Partner Matrix

Members will continue to obtain information to complete this project.

Response to DES/Earl Wilson

Deferred to the next meeting.

Feedback from Lansing, Michigan

John Mohr will have more information at the next meeting.

Core Partner’s Discussion

Marcia Fink attended the last Core Partner’s meeting held October 2, 2002. She said the partners were very focused on the ten percent cuts facing them and that they recognize the lack of skills of staff in assisting the unemployment participants. There are generalists in place to help start them in the right direction. She also noted the system was geared more for the job seeker than the employer as a customer. Partners talked about the WorkForce Center as serving jobseekers, that employers could be better served in a centralized employer resource center. Jean Hammink will email Paul Huot regarding the shortened version of an employer survey Research and Measurement is trying to develop.

Committee Structures

Marcia Fink stated that the best approach would be to wait until the CEO is on board so that person can help make those decisions.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Next Meeting

Note - November’s meeting has been cancelled.

December 9, 2:30-4:00 p.m., Midtown Commons, 2324 University Ave. West, Suite 105